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THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF GRACE

THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF GRACE

BY

G. H. JOYCE, S.J.

ST. BEUNO'S COLLEGE, ST. ASAPH

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INTRODUCTION

It is very generally admitted that at the present day there is a widespread desire among Catholics for instruction regarding the truths of their religion. Those preachers are the most sought after whose sermons are known to convey positive teaching as to the faith; while for the purely hortatory sermon, however good of its kind, there is little demand. Nor is this state of things confined to English-speaking peoples. Even in those countries in which the oratorical style was at one time regarded as essential to good preaching, the more homely instruction seems to be now largely taking its place. The reason for this is not hard to see. There has never, perhaps, been a time when the Catholic religion was more canvassed and discussed than at the present day. Men see that it alone has held its ground unshaken by the tremendous religious disintegration of the nineteenth century; that the crisis which seemed to threaten all belief in religion has,

contrary to all expectation, left it stronger than it was before. This fact has made it an object of deep interest alike to the unbeliever and to the earnest seeker after truth. It is only natural that in the circumstances Catholics should desire to possess a clear knowledge of what the Church teaches. Without this they can do little to reply to objections, or to help those who inquire of them regarding their faith. Yet for the laity such knowledge is not easily accessible. Works on theology are ordinarily addressed to the clergy alone. They are drawn up in a highly technical manner—a manner ill-suited to readers who have not been through the mill of the theological schools. It is to meet the need of such readers, who constitute, I am inclined to believe, no inconsiderable body, that the present work has been written. In it I have sought to set forth the Church's teaching on Grace, avoiding as far as possible the technical terminology and the citation of authorities, which are customary in works on divinity, but which would mean little or nothing to those who are not already grounded in that science.

Throughout the work the authority of St. Thomas Aquinas has been closely followed. On points where theologians differ I have thought

it sufficient to give reasons for adopting his solution without attempting a detailed refutation of other views. To have done so would, as I have just indicated, have defeated the very purpose with which the book was written.

It may, perhaps, occasion some surprise that I have made no attempt to deal with the problem respecting the operation of efficacious grace, which for so long was the subject of such acute controversy between the Dominican and Jesuit Orders. Yet I think that the reasons for the omission are adequate. The point at issue was as to the nature of the causality exercised by God as First Cause and Prime Mover upon the free acts of the will. So far as the actual dispute was concerned, the matter was treated chiefly in regard to God's action on the will within the order of grace. But the question is one and the same, whether it be raised in relation to the special aids of grace, or more generally in reference to the Divine assistance requisite for the production of any and every act of the human will. Hence it indubitably belongs more appropriately to the treatise on God and His Attributes than to that with which we are here concerned. There seems little advantage in dealing with it in its application to the special case of the super-

natural order. The solution reached in regard to the more general issue must necessarily determine that proper to the particular application. What is more, the doctrine of grace can, it seems to me, be fully treated without touching upon this point. Our belief that God is able by His efficacious grace to guide the human will according to His good pleasure without infringing its liberty, does not involve us in the necessity of investigating the precise mode in which He exercises this guidance. In the treatise on God and His Attributes it is otherwise. There the subject calls for consideration in its own right, and the treatise would be incomplete without it. I may further add that the problem is primarily a metaphysical one ; and there is reason to doubt whether many readers would have cared to follow so abstract and difficult a discussion. In these circumstances I judged it best to leave the question untouched ; and so far as in me lay, I have avoided all expression of opinion on the matter. I do not think that the book suffers from the omission.

In quoting from Scripture in those passages where the Douay Bible, taken as it is from the Vulgate, fails to convey the full meaning of the original Greek, I have made use of the Protestant Revised Version ; the few citations drawn from

this source are in all cases distinguished by the letters R.V.

Among recent works dealing with my subject I must acknowledge my special obligations to *La Grace et la Gloire* by Père J. Terrien, S.J., and *De l'Inhabitation du S. Esprit* by Père B. Froget, O.P.

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THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF GRACE

CHAPTER I

SANCTIFYING GRACE—I

1. Sons of God. 2. Divine Adoption. 3. Regeneration. 4. The Life of the Soul. 5. The Term "Grace." 6. Incorporation into Christ.

1. THE redemptive work of Calvary has made of men the sons of God. This truth is reiterated again and again by the writers of the New Testament. And one and all make it clear that the sonship of which they speak is no mere metaphor: that it is a new endowment of our nature, conferring upon us a supernatural dignity, raising us to a new rank in the scale of being, and ensuring to us a destiny of glory to which, otherwise, we should have had no title.

It may, perhaps, be asked whether we are not God's children in virtue of our creation alone? Have not all men, it may be urged, whether they are followers of Christ or not, a right to call God their Father? He is the

Author of their being: they are dependent for all things on His Providence. Does not this suffice to make our relation towards Him one of sonship? The answer to this question must be in the negative. The relation of the creature to the Creator is utterly different from that of a child to his father. A child has the right to share his father's home, his father's happiness, his father's intimate companionship. He is, in a sense, one with his father. Creation gives us no title to any union such as this. The life of man, if his natural destiny alone be considered, has no common element with the life of God. The creature as such is God's servant, not God's child. A servant may claim that his master should protect him and provide for him. And similarly the creature has a claim that God should exercise His Providence on his behalf. But he has no right to enjoy fellowship with God as His child. An infinite distance separates them, the one from the other.

In thus denying that creation suffices to render man the child of God we are not, it must be understood, speaking of the condition in which God placed our first parents, when He called them into being. They were, it is true, God's children. But they were so not in virtue of their creation, but by reason of an additional

and supernatural endowment which it pleased Him to bestow on them. That endowment Adam forfeited alike for himself and his descendants by the Fall. With this subject, however, we shall deal in a later chapter

It is, indeed, the case that some of the pagan poets taught that man is akin to God: and that St. Paul himself quotes them as saying that "we are also His offspring" (Acts xvii. 28). But in fact it was not of sonship in any true sense that they were speaking. They were inspired by the ideas of Stoic philosophy: they held that the world was an emanation from God, and that the human reason was actually a particle of the Divine reason itself. It was in this erroneous sense alone that they claimed kinship with the Godhead. The idea of fellowship with God was remote from their minds.

The New Testament, on the other hand, speaks of a veritable sonship. It teaches that in virtue of an act of Divine condescension man can enter on a new relation to God; that through Jesus Christ he ceases to be a servant and becomes a son: and that he is thus privileged to enjoy that which by nature can belong to no creature however exalted — fellowship with God.

The words of the inspired writers are such

as to leave no doubt as to their meaning. St. John points to this sonship as the special privilege conferred on those who accept the revelation of Jesus Christ, and affirms in weighty terms the supernatural character of the gift. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name: who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 11-13). And in another passage he writes: "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God. . . . Dearly beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him" (1 John iii. 1, 2). The words could hardly be more emphatic. The apostle goes out of his way to assure us that the sonship is no mere metaphor, but a reality; and he tells us that the ultimate destiny of those who have been raised to this dignity, is to become sharers in the Divine glory. Again, he teaches us that those who have been made God's children are privileged to enjoy a filial intimacy with Him: "That which we have seen and have heard, we

declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3).

The same truths are found in many passages of St. Paul's writings. "God," he says, "hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ" (Eph. i. 5). Those who are thus sons of God enjoy, he declares, the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal. iv. 6). And elsewhere he tells us that where the Holy Ghost abides, He produces in the soul an unhesitating conviction that the chasm between the Creator and the creature has been bridged, and that we are indeed God's children—one family with His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ: "The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God: and if sons, heirs also; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17).

St. Peter and St. James are no less clear. "We have been begotten again," says St. Peter, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet. i. 23, R.V.). And St. James tells us: "Of His own will hath He begotten us by the

word of truth that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (Jas. i. 13, R.V.).

Nor are we without the testimony of our Lord Himself. He spoke of the dignity to which His followers are called in terms which go even further than the passages we have already cited. Their union with Him, He declared, is so intimate that they share His life (John xv. 5), and thus through Him, the only-begotten Son, they are in the closest communion with the Father (xvii. 20). In this way they participate in the glory which is His by right, and the love with which the Father loves Him becomes theirs also (xvii. 22, 26). In the same discourse in which He spoke of these things He promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit, who should take up His abode in them, and thus effect their union with the Divine Trinity (xiv. 16, *sqq.*). It is in the light of these utterances that we must interpret the message sent to the eleven on the morning of the Resurrection : "I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God" (John xx. 17). The words at once affirm the truth of our sonship, and distinguish it from His. He is Son by nature ; we are created beings, raised to sonship as the effect of His Redemption.

The apostles do not hesitate to tell us that the very purpose of the Incarnation was to confer this sonship upon men. Thus St. Paul writes: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law: that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). We are more accustomed, it may be, to use other terms, and to say that God sent His Son to save us from sin. But the expressions are equivalent. The Redemption is more than a mere remission of guilt. Together with forgiveness is bestowed the gift of sonship. The same grace that blots out man's guilt makes him a son of God.

Outside the Catholic Church there have been some who have sought to explain the sonship of which the New Testament speaks, as meaning no more than that the barrier which sin had placed between man and his Maker was done away, and that men had thereby been restored to the condition in which as God's creatures they should ever have been. The change, they hold, is simply a restoration of the moral order, which sin had disturbed. We have already shown that such a view involves a total misconception of what sonship really implies. And the passages

we have quoted will have made it clear that the gift of which the New Testament speaks is no mere restoration of moral order, but the elevation to a new and supernatural dignity.

2. We have seen that St. Paul speaks of us as sons of God by adoption (Rom. viii. 15; Eph. i. 5; Gal. iv. 4). The expression is employed by all theological writers to distinguish our sonship from the natural sonship of the Eternal Word. Yet it calls for some consideration: for, as used by the apostle, the term "adoption" had a somewhat different meaning from that which it bears at the present day. In its modern use it signifies little more than the intention to educate the adopted child as though he were a son, and, provided he should give no cause for dissatisfaction, to bequeath to him a son's inheritance. This purpose is revocable at will, and confers no legal rights on the person adopted. The adoption of which the apostle spoke was something very different from this. Under the Roman law the sanctions of adoption were of the strongest kind, and the rights conferred were in all respects the same as those which attach to natural sonship. Before the law the person adopted no longer belonged to the family in which he had been born, but to that into which he had been adopted. His

membership in the new family was henceforth not on sufferance or at will, but by indefeasible right. Its social and political interests, and those of the *gens* or clan to which it belonged, were his interests. The dignities that belonged to his new family were his. Nor could the adoption be reversed save through legal formalities just as strictly prescribed as those by which he had been admitted. In the eye of the law he had been born again.

From this it will appear that when St. Paul speaks of us as sons by adoption he entirely excludes the view first mentioned—that the sonship of the New Testament signifies no more than a return of man to the obedience due from him to God, and the consequent renewal of God's favour in his regard. The term implies a fundamental alteration in man's status, bringing him into the very closest fellowship with God.

Yet even when this is borne in mind, the expression may mislead us. It almost inevitably suggests to our minds the limitations of human adoption. From these the Divine adoption is free. Indeed, it is impossible in the nature of things that an attribute should belong to God in precisely the same way as it belongs to man. It must needs belong to Him in such a manner

as no longer to carry with it the imperfections which attach to it in the creature. Hence the sense in which it is affirmed of Him is analogous to, but not identical with, that in which it is affirmed of man. Thus we call God the Maker of the world which He created ; and we use the same term " maker " of men in regard to their works—speaking of the inventor as the maker of the machine which he has devised, and of the potter as the maker of the vessel he has fashioned. But the meaning of the word in the two cases is very different. Man does but shape and apply the materials which lie ready to his hand. It is God who has provided those materials ; and He has fixed the laws which determine their use. Man can but employ what God has given him ; God alone can make, in the full and perfect sense of the term. When He made the world, He created it. Before He spoke the word there was nothing—not even empty space. When He commanded the universe sprang into being in accordance with His design, and in obedience to His purpose. Similarly, we say that man heals and that God heals. Yet here, too, it is but by analogy that the same word is employed in the two cases. Man heals by assisting the vital forces to repair what is amiss. Those forces must act

according to their own laws. If the body has suffered injury, it can only be repaired at the rate at which their action proceeds. With God it is otherwise. He is not dependent on natural law, for nature obeys Him as her Lord. When He cures miraculously, the cure in very many cases is instantaneous. The destroyed tissues reappear; they are not slowly built up in Nature's laboratory. Even where the natural force is non-existent, as in the case of the man born blind, His word has power to call it into being.

Adoption affords another instance of the analogous use of a term as applied to God and as applied to man. Man adopts and God adopts. Yet human adoption, however strong are the sanctions given to it, is at best a legal fiction. It cannot make a man what he is not. No legal instrument can alter his personal characteristics —those distinctive properties of body and of mind which are his by birth. These he received from his parents. No change can be effected in them so as to render him in this regard the heir of the family into which he has been adopted. It is otherwise with Divine adoption. In God's dealings legal fictions have no place. If, as revelation assures us, God makes us His sons, it follows that thereby man is enriched with

new powers and new endowments, which make him in some mysterious way like to God. In virtue of his adoption he becomes what he was not before : he is born again.

3. This truth is set before us in express terms in the doctrine of *Regeneration*. This word has become so familiar that men often fail to realize what it signifies. We see it employed occasionally to denote nothing more than a moral amelioration in a man's character. Yet its true meaning is far different from this. It signifies that a new nature has been conferred on us : that the humanity we received from our parents by natural generation has been transformed into something better ; that a Divine operation has moulded us into the image and likeness of God, and has thereby given us the right to call Him Father. The moral change which regeneration involves is the result of this far more fundamental renewing of the soul. Thus St. Paul writes : " Not by works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the laver of regeneration and the renovation of the Holy Ghost, Whom He hath poured forth on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour " (Tit. iii. 5, 6). St. John in his first epistle employs the strongest terms to show of how transcendent a character is the gift

bestowed upon us. "Whosoever is born of God," he says, "committeth not sin; for His seed abideth in him" (1 John iii. 9). The precise meaning of the assertion that regeneration is incompatible with sin will be considered in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to point out that the apostle's words imply that a physical transformation takes place in the souls of those who are "born of God." Nothing less than this can be signified by the words: "His seed abideth in him." Precisely the same teaching is contained in some words of St. Peter, which we have already had occasion to quote: "We have been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." Our Lord Himself, at the very beginning of His ministry, put this truth before Nicodemus. "Unless a man be born again," He said to him, "he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). And when the Jewish doctor pressed to know His meaning further, He declared that the new birth of which He spoke must be effected by the Holy Spirit Himself, and that it was bestowed on man through the sacrament of baptism: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5).

Occasionally St. Paul speaks of the change

involved in this new birth as a new creation. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ," he writes, "he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new" (2 Cor. v. 16., R.V.). And again: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. ii. 10). And later in the same epistle he exhorts his readers to "put on the new man who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24).

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the strength of the expressions which the fathers of the Church employ regarding the new birth of baptism. St. Chrysostom says: "What its mother's womb is to the child, that the water of baptism is to the believer: in it he is formed and fashioned."[1] And the same striking simile is found in Clement of Alexandria, St. Cyprian, St. Cyril of Jerusalem and others. St. Leo the Great and St. Ambrose do not hesitate to compare the baptismal water with the womb of the Blessed Virgin, which gave birth to the Son of God. "The water of baptism," says St. Leo, "is for every man who is born again as it were the Virgin's womb: and the same Spirit fills the font, Who filled the Virgin."[2]

[1] Hom. XXVI. *In Joan* (P.G. lix., 153).
[2] Leo M., *Serm. in Nat.*, iv. (P.L. liv., 206).

In yet another series of passages a comparison is drawn between the office of water in baptism and the part ascribed to that element in the account of the creation. As the Holy Spirit moved upon the face of the waters ere yet life had appeared upon the earth, so does His presence rest upon the waters of the font: as on the fifth day of the Creation water was the element from which living creatures first issued, so it is now water that gives birth to soul. Thus St Jerome writes: "The Spirit of God alone moved, even as one who drives his chariot, over the face of the waters, and produced from them the infant world, a type of the Christian child that is drawn from the laver of baptism. . . . The first living beings come out of the waters: and believers soar out of the laver with wings to heaven."[1] Tertullian, Theophilus of Antioch, Chrysostom—all speak in similar terms.

It is of interest to note that in one of the ancient liturgical prayers still employed by the Church at a service which most of the readers of this work will have often witnessed, the same two comparisons occur. The Preface sung at the Blessing of the Font on Holy Saturday contains the following words: "O God, Whose

[1] Jerome, Ep. LXIX. (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Frs.*, p. 145).

Spirit moved upon the waters at the first creation of things, that the nature of water might even then receive power to sanctify . . . may He (the Holy Spirit) by the secret infusion of His Divinity render fruitful this water prepared for the regeneration of men: that it may receive the gift of sanctity, and from the immaculate womb of the Divine fount a heavenly offspring may come forth, born again into a new creature." In the early Church the baptism of catechumens took place on Holy Saturday. The whole prayer has direct and immediate reference to the ceremony just about to follow, which was to make them members of the Church and number them amongst God's children. They are the "heavenly offspring" which the baptismal font was to bring forth to the new life. And the Preface, which is of considerable length, closes with the petition "that each one who becomes a partaker of this sacrament of regeneration may be born again into a new infancy, in which true innocence shall be his."

These citations, short and inadequate as they are, will suffice to show how intense has been the conviction of the Church in every age that the new birth which makes man a son of God is a tremendous reality: that after it he is an

altogether different being from what he was before.

4. The passages in the New Testament in which we are told that the purpose of our Lord's coming was that men might have "life," are but another expression of the same truth. It will be worth our while to consider some of these: for they will help us to realize still more clearly how large is the place which this doctrine occupies in the Christian revelation. "I am come," our Lord says, "that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John x. 10). And again: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, shall live: and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die for ever" (John xi. 25, 26). This life He assured His followers was to find its appropriate nourishment in the gift of the Holy Eucharist which He was about to bestow: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi. 54). And St. John, to whom we owe the record of these sayings, closes the main narrative of his Gospel with the words: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing you may have life in His Name" (John xx. 31). The same apostle's first epistle

sets before us with almost startling distinctness the great alternative between this life, God's gift to those who accept Christ, and spiritual death, the lot of those who reject Him: "He that hath the Son hath life: he that hath not the Son hath not life. These things I write to you that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God" (1 John v. 12, 13).

The life of which our Lord and His apostle speak in these passages, and which they sometimes term eternal life, is, plainly enough, not something which belongs to a future existence alone, but an endowment which those who believe in Christ possess here, and which death when it comes will be unable to destroy. What it is, St. John tells us. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ," he says, "is born of God" (1 John v. 1). The life which Christ has brought us, which He purchased for us at the price of His Passion, is the life which makes us sons of God—the life which becomes ours through the new birth of regeneration.

When the Catholic Church speaks of "sanctifying grace," it is this new life given us by God that she means. But here it should be noted that the term "life" has two senses. Sometimes we employ it to denote the state in which

a man is capable of exercising the activities which flow from the existence of a vital principle. It is in this sense that we say that a man's life has been a happy or a sad one, or that his life has lasted so many years. On the other hand, sometimes it is used to signify the vital principle itself. Sanctifying grace is life in this latter sense: it is *the vital principle by which we live as sons of God.* When we wish to speak of the state in which we are capable of the activities proper to this life, we speak of the state of grace.

5. Here it seems desirable to say a few words as to the term "grace." Passages of Scripture may very possibly occur to the mind of the reader, in which the word cannot be understood as signifying the life of which we have been speaking. How, it may be asked, is this to be explained? Is it really the case that the Church, while adopting a word from Scripture, has attached to it a meaning other than that which it there bears?

To this it may be answered that in Scripture the word "grace" (χάρις, *gratia*) is used in several senses. Very frequently, certainly, it signifies not a gift bestowed on us, but the goodwill or favour with which God regards us. Thus St. Paul says of God, that He "called me

by His grace" (Gal. i. 15), and tells us that we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). In the same sense he lays stress on the difference between what is freely bestowed by grace and what is due as a matter of pure justice. "If the election is by grace, it is not now by works; otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. xi. 6). But the word is also used to signify the gifts which God's goodwill towards us leads Him to bestow. In this reference, with one or two rare exceptions (*e.g.*, 2 Cor. ix. 8), it is used of spiritual gifts only; and more particularly of those which God confers through Christ as the fruit of His redemptive work. Thus the apostle writes to the Corinthians: "We exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. vi. 1). It is this use of the term that leads him to distinguish the Christian dispensation, as that of grace, from the Jewish dispensation, that of the law. As thus employed it may denote all the various spiritual gifts bestowed on the Church. Thus we read: "There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit . . . to one indeed by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another the grace of healing, in one Spirit"

(1 Cor. xii. 7-9). But occasionally the word is used in an altogether restricted reference, to signify the characteristic prerogative of Christians as such—the spiritual gift which is theirs in virtue of their membership in the Church, and which is the ground of their confidence towards God. This is nothing else than the gift of which we have been speaking, the new life by which the Christian becomes a son of God; in other words, sanctifying grace. Thus St. Peter speaks of himself as "testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein you stand" (1 Pet. v. 12); and elsewhere bids his readers "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18). And similarly St. Paul says that "Through Jesus Christ we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. v. 2).

There are one or two other uses of the word in Scripture. But as they occur but rarely, and do not bear on our subject, it will be sufficient merely to notice their existence. It is used to denote that which attracts favour: "Let your speech be always in grace"—*i.e.*, courteous and such as to win goodwill (Col. iv. 6). And once or twice it has the sense of "thanks": "Thanks be to God Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 57).

Nothing could be more natural than that among Christians the word should soon become a technical term to signify the spiritual gifts characteristic of the religion of Christ; and that the gift of new life, by which we become sons of God, should be regarded as the supreme grace. As theological terminology developed, the expression "sanctifying grace" was employed to distinguish it from other gifts which also had a claim to be designated as graces. And that name has now passed into common use.

The gift of Divine sonship is by no means the only immediate effect resulting from the infusion of sanctifying grace into the soul. Scripture sets before us other aspects of this elevation of our nature. We are incorporated into Christ, and participate in His life; we become "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ"; we are made "partakers of the Divine nature." We shall conclude the present chapter with some account of our incorporation into Christ, reserving the two latter heads for subsequent treatment.

6. Our incorporation into Christ is taught in explicit terms in our Lord's discourse to His apostles at the Last Supper. There He compared His relationship to them to that which the vine bears to its branches. "I am the

vine," He said, "you are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John xv. 5). The words imply that there is a real and organic union between the Christian and Christ; and that this union confers on the former a new and higher life, which is sustained by a continuous communication of vital energy from Christ Himself. This teaching receives full development in St. Paul's writings. We are, he assures us, members of Christ; Christ is the Head, and we are members of His Body, which is the Church. "Know you not," he says, "that your members are the members of Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 15); and again: "As the body is one and hath many members . . . so also is Christ. . . . Now you are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. xii. 12, 27, R.V.). It is this, he tells us, that makes us God's children: "You are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 26, 27). Those who are admitted to this union by baptism become sharers in Christ's Passion and Resurrection. The symbolic burial and resurrection of baptism, when the new Christian is dipped in the water and rises from it again,

effects a spiritual transformation in him. "Are ye ignorant," says the apostle, "that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried, therefore, with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised again from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 3, 4, R.V.).

The change which we have just considered transfers us, we are told, from the family of the first Adam to that of the second. The image of Christ takes the place of the image of Adam in us: the new man replaces the old. Yet during our earthly existence this change is not complete. And, in order that the life of Christ may receive its full development, the old man within us must be done to death—it must be crucified. Thus the apostle speaks of himself as "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body" (2 Cor. iv. 10). And to his Colossian neophytes he writes as follows: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. . . . For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. . . . Mortify (*lit.*, put to death), therefore, your members

which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness" (Col. iii. 1-5). In this way the life of grace is a progressive assimilation to Christ on the part of the Christian. It is a continuous advance in the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new (Eph. iv. 8).

In what measure, it may be asked, can the union with Christ be attained? What is its goal so far as our present life is concerned? This also has been told us. It may be carried so far as to justify the apostle's words: "I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 30, R.V.). Our sonship is, in fact, nothing less than the transformation of our nature into the likeness of the Son of God; and the principle which is to effect this change in us, which is to raise us from our baseness to this stupendous dignity, is the sanctifying grace conferred upon us at our baptism.

CHAPTER II

SANCTIFYING GRACE—II

1. Heirs of God. 2. Partakers of the Divine Nature. 3. Opposition between Sanctifying Grace and Sin. 4. State of Justification.

1. SCRIPTURE assures us that one of the effects of our sonship is that we are to be heirs of God. "If a son, an heir also through God" (Gal. iv. 7) says St. Paul. Moreover, he declares that the inheritance to which we have a claim is comparable to that enjoyed by our Lord Himself. We are, he tells us, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 17). Expressions such as these cannot be set aside as metaphors. They can only signify that in virtue of our sonship we are to possess the treasures which are by nature proper to God alone. In regard to this Divine inheritance, however, we must be careful to avoid the limitations involved in the idea of inheritance as it is known among men. The material possessions which men own here can belong to one

person only at a time: and for that reason a son cannot inherit as long as his father lives. As regards spiritual riches it is otherwise. They can be held by many simultaneously, and the increase in the number of those who hold them does not diminish the full possession enjoyed by each. Men inherit the kingdom of God when they are elevated to a share in those spiritual treasures which make the blessedness of God. It is this which our adoption secures for us. The beatitude which by nature would be the exclusive prerogative of the Three Divine Persons, becomes ours also.

In what does God's bliss consist? The bliss of every spiritual being must needs be found in the exercise of thought and love: for it is by these powers that spiritual riches are possessed. God is a Spirit: and it is by knowledge and by love that He enjoys the infinite riches of the Godhead. Moreover, if we ask what is the object the contemplation and love of which constitute His beatitude, we must answer that it can only be the Supreme Truth and the Supreme Good—the abyss of all perfection, the Divine Essence itself. God cannot be dependent for His blessedness on any creature: and were the immediate object of His contemplation anything but Himself, this would be the case. The joy

with which He contemplates the world He has made cannot add anything to that which was His before the world was. The created universe, with all its innumerable wonders, does but mirror forth an infinitesimal fragment of the treasures of truth and reality contained in the infinity of Divine Being. God loves all that He has made: and He loves those things most which are most worthy of His love. But creatures deserve His love only in proportion as they manifest, more or less adequately, some element in His own uncreated perfection. The supreme object of love can be nothing but the Source of all Good.

God's love for Himself involves no egoism, as would be the case, were a creature's love to centre in itself. Egoism is to love self more than one loves the Good: to invert the due order of things by a disproportionate love of self. There is no inversion of due order in God's love for Himself. He is supreme goodness, and in loving Himself it is goodness that He loves. This love is the highest holiness: for holiness consists in the love of the Good.

We are accustomed to say that the bliss of God is found in the Beatific Vision. By that term we signify primarily the immediate knowledge of the Divine Essence. But it does not

lie in knowledge alone. The contemplation of the Good carries with it the love of the Good. The Beatific Vision is alike infinite knowledge and infinite love. Again the perfect knowledge and perfect love of the highest Good involve as their consequence supreme joy. For joy is consequent on the possession of the Good: and, as we have already noted, in the spiritual order possession consists in cognition and love. Thus the bliss of God is at the same time infinite intelligence, infinite love and infinite joy.

The Vision of God is utterly beyond the scope of man's natural endowments. In regard to what is so far above us, we are altogether powerless. This truth finds expression in some words of St. Paul. He speaks of God as the "King of kings and Lord of lords, . . . Who inhabiteth light inaccessible, Whom no man hath seen or can see" (1 Tim. vi. 15). Indeed reason itself shows us that no created being, however exalted, can by its natural powers enjoy the immediate intuition of God. The limits of a creature's knowledge are fixed and determined by its faculties. And the reach of a creature's faculties is strictly limited: it is not indefinite. Why is it that a man cannot perceive the spiritual world around him—the good and evil angels that are about his path? We

can know *about* these things: but we are incapable of direct knowledge of them. It is not because in themselves they are incapable of being the objects of direct cognition. It is because we are men, and although we have a spiritual soul, yet all the elements of our knowledge must come to us through the avenues of sense. From the data of sense we can argue to the existence of a spiritual world; but we cannot perceive it. Our nature is corporeal: and hence the immediate knowledge of pure spirits —a higher order of being—is beyond our faculties. It may be laid down as a general principle, that where natures are on entirely different planes of being, the lower nature is incapable of direct perception of the higher. Such a difference there is between the corporeal and the incorporeal. But how much more is this true of God and creatures. Even the highest creature is separated from God by an immeasurable distance—by the chasm which divides the finite from the Infinite. There is no common genus for the self-existent Creator, and for those beings which are held up out of nothingness by the act of His will. However exalted the nature of a creature may be, however wide the range of its faculties, it is utterly impossible that those faculties should give it a

direct and immediate intuition of God. For the natural powers of a creature must correspond to its finite essence. And powers proportioned to a finite essence must be destined for finite objects. The direct knowledge of the Infinite must in the very nature of things be wholly beyond them.

Yet although the possession of Divine beatitude is, so far as our natural powers are concerned, altogether out of our reach, it is no less certain that it is to be ours. God designs to raise us by His omnipotence to a beatitude and a glory to which, by nature, we have no claim. Again and again does Holy Scripture assure us that the happiness of the Blessed lies in the Beatific Vision itself—in the unveiled Vision of God. "Dearly beloved," says the apostle, "we are now the sons of God: and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2); and again, speaking of the blessed in heaven, he says: "His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face" (Apoc. xxii. 4, 5). St. Paul expressly contrasts the obscure knowledge which we now possess by faith, with the open vision to be granted to us in heaven. The knowledge of faith, he says, is, at best, indirect like the

image of a man, as it is seen reflected in a mirror in heaven faith will pass into sight: "Now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12, R.V.). It is in this sense, too, that we should in all probability understand our Lord's words when He promises to His apostles that they shall share His glory: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as We also are one . . . Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me: that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me" (John xvii. 22, 24). The Beatific Vision is in the truest sense the glory of the only-begotten Son; for by nature, as we have seen, it is the exclusive prerogative of the Three Divine Persons. And the same truth seems to be expressed where our Lord promises to His apostles that "they shall eat and drink at My table in My kingdom" (Luke xxii. 30); and where He declares in the Apocalypse that, "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me on My throne" (Apoc. iii. 21) Such words imply far more than mere creaturely happiness; they signify the participation in rights and privileges proper to the Son of God Himself.

Without sanctifying grace, human nature has no claim to beatitude such as this. But the infant, who expires with grace in his soul, enters as by right on this inheritance of glory. Grace has made him a son and thereby an heir of God. It is no wonder that the Church esteems the baptism of a dying infant a matter of such overwhelming moment as to be well worth the sacrifice of life itself to attain such an end.

Grace is the title to glory. But it must not be imagined that the connection between the two is purely external, and that glory follows grace simply because God has decreed that so it shall be. Grace is nothing less than the commencement of glory. Nor is it hard to show that this is so. The Beatific Vision, as we have seen, involves the elevation of our faculties to a new plane. The intellect must be endowed with higher powers, through which it can possess that which by nature is beyond it—the direct intuition of the Divine Essence. The will must receive an altogether new love of God—a love corresponding to that new filial relation, in which those stand who are co-heirs with Christ of Divine beatitude. In other words, a new life must be infused into the soul —the life of the sons of God. But this, as the

Christian revelation teaches us, is precisely what grace confers. We do not have to wait for this gift. It is ours already. Undoubtedly we do not enjoy it in its full development. Our intellect is not as yet strengthened to see God, though the language of the great mystics would seem to suggest that to some of them even this has been granted as a transient favour. But what we possess in germ here will be ours in its full maturity in heaven. The life of grace will pass into the life of glory. "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be: we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

2. Yet another of the immediate effects of grace remains to be considered. God, says St. Peter, "has given us most great and precious promises that by these you may be made *partakers of the Divine nature*" (2 Pet. i. 4). Startling as the words are, the teaching which we have already considered will have prepared us for them. They signify that the sonship conferred on us through Jesus Christ raises us so far above our creaturely condition, that by it we partake in the life which is proper to the Three Divine Persons in virtue of Their nature. The passage

does not stand altogether alone. When our Lord prays to His Father on behalf of the apostles and all who through their word should believe in Him, "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us . . . I in them, and Thou in Me: that they may be made perfect in one" (John xvii. 22, 23), His words can hardly signify less than this. If our union with God is comparable to that which unites the Father and the Son, it can only be a union based on a share in the Divine life.

In what manner can a created gift such as grace raise us to this wonderful fellowship? This question we have already answered. The effect of grace is to render us capable of the Beatific Vision. And this is the beatitude appropriate to the Divine nature and to no other. Those, therefore, who by a marvellous work of God's omnipotence are elevated to that stupendous privilege, are in truth partakers of the Divine nature.

The fathers of the Church from the earliest times with one consent take the apostle's words in their literal sense. There is no question of any figurative interpretation. They do not hesitate to speak of the "deification" of man. By grace, they tell us, men become gods. Thus

in the second century, St. Irenæus writes: "We are not made gods from the first, but first men, then gods."[1] His testimony is of peculiar value: for we know that he imbibed his knowledge of Christian truth from St. Polycarp, himself a disciple of the apostle St. John. We cannot doubt that on a point such as this he is giving us the apostolic tradition. His yet earlier contemporary, St. Justin Martyr, is no less explicit. "The word of God," he writes, "makes mortals into immortals, men into gods."[2] Precisely the same teaching is found in Clement of Alexandria, Theophilus of Antioch, Hippolytus and Origen.

When we come to the fourth century, the age of the greatest of the Greek fathers, the doctrine occupies a prominent place in the controversy with the Macedonian heretics, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen in refuting this error assume that their readers will all admit that we are deified by the grace which the Holy Spirit infuses into our souls. This they regard as a point beyond dispute, as one of those fundamentals which no one who calls himself a Christian dreams of denying, and which may therefore serve as a basis for argu-

[1] *Adv. Hær.*, iv., 38 (P.G. vii., 1109).

[2] *Or. ad Græc.*, 5 (P.G. vi., 238).

ment. They urge that it is absurd to hold that any save God Himself can make men to be gods: and that this alone demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is not a created being but truly God. Thus, St. Athanasius says: "If by the communication of the Holy Spirit we are made partakers of the Divine nature, he would be mad who should say that the Holy Spirit has a created nature and not the nature of God. For it is through Him that they in whom He dwells are deified. But if He deifies, then there can be no doubt that His nature is the nature of God."[1] St. Gregory Nazianzen speaks to the same effect: "I cannot believe that salvation is communicated to me by an equal. If the Holy Spirit is not God, let Him first become God and then let Him bring me, his equal, to Divine honours."[2]

The testimony of the West is no less decisive. St. Augustine appeals to this doctrine to explain the opening words of the forty-ninth Psalm: "The God of gods, the Lord, hath spoken: and hath called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof." What, he inquires, is signified by the expression: "The God of gods"? In the course of his reply, he writes as

[1] *Ad Serap.*, i., 24 (P.G. xxvi. 585).
[2] *Or.* 34 (P.G. xxxvi. 252).

follows: "It is evident that it is men whom He calls gods, not, of course, as being begotten of His nature, but as being deified by His grace. For as He who is just in His own right, and who does not owe His justice to another, can alone justify, so He alone can deify who is God in His own right, and not by another's gift. He who justifies, He it is who deifies, for by justification He makes men sons of God. *He gave them power to be made the sons of God* (John i. 12). If we have been made sons of God, then we have been made gods. But it is God's grace that effects this by adoption, not His nature by generation."[1] And in another place he says: "He descended that we might ascend; and retaining His own Divine nature, He partook of our human nature, that we, while retaining the nature that is ours, might become partakers of His."[2]

The Church's theologians have been faithful to the patristic tradition. St. Thomas Aquinas proposes the question whether God alone can produce sanctifying grace: and replies that since grace is a participation in the Divine nature, it follows that none but God can produce grace: for God alone can deify. Elsewhere

[1] *Enarr. in Ps.* xlix., 2 (P.L. xxxvi., 565).
[2] *Epist.* 140, *ad Honor.*, n. 10 (P.L. xxxiii., 542).

he writes: "The only-begotten Son of God, desiring to make us partakers of His Godhead, assumed our nature, that, having become man, He might make men to be gods."[1]

We do not believe that we shall be held to have multiplied quotations unnecessarily on this point. The doctrine of man's deification is so wonderful that the mind finds it hard to believe it true. Conscious as we are of our baseness, we can scarcely credit that we are to receive—or rather have already received—so amazing a dignity. We ask ourselves if this is not after all only a metaphor. It needs the repeated and emphatic assertions of the great teachers of the Church to persuade us that it is no metaphor, but the literal truth; that the sanctifying grace with which we are endowed, communicates to us properties which in their essential nature are divine; that through it we are destined to share in the life and the beatitude of the Ever Blessed Trinity.

3. The state of grace and the state of sin are mutually exclusive. The state of grace is a state of friendship with God. The fellowship with God which grace confers, necessarily involves our union with God by love. If there

[1] *Summ. Theol.*, 1^{a}, 2^{ae}, 112, art. 1; *Off. in Fest. Corp. Chr.*, Lect. iv.

be no love, there can be no fellowship: that is to say, grace is absent. On the other hand the state of sin is a state of enmity with God. By all grave sin the sinner rejects God's service. The will turns itself away from Him to creatures. Where there is mortal sin, then there is the positive aversion of the will from God. Hence any mortal sin is sufficient to expel grace from the soul.

St. Paul treats at some length of the opposition between grace and sin in Romans vi., pointing out that the difference between them is that between servitude and liberty. Baptism, by which grace is bestowed, he reminds us, symbolizes death and resurrection. We pass from a lower life to a higher—from a state of servitude to sin to a state of incorporation into Christ and to a share in His life. But he warns us that those who, after having been thus freed, yield to temptation and commit mortal sin, inevitably fall back forthwith into the state of bondage and spiritual death from which they had been released: "Reckon, that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof . . . know you not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are whom

you obey, whether it be of sin unto death or of obedience unto justice . . . For the wages of sin is death; but the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vi. 11, 12, 16, 23).

The opposition between grace and mortal sin is of so radical a character, that not even Divine omnipotence could bring it about that they should co-exist in the same soul. At one time there was some debate on this point. But at present Catholic theologians are practically unanimous in holding that the words of Scripture involve this conclusion. Scripture describes the opposition between the two as being that which exists between light and darkness (Eph. v. 8, 2 Cor. vi. 14); life and death (1 John iii. 14, Col. ii. 13); the new man and the old man (Col. iii. 9); the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of Christ (Col. i. 13). Expressions such as these seem to be quite incompatible with any other conclusion than that the two states are direct contraries. Even omnipotence cannot unite two contraries: it cannot make two straight lines enclose a space, or make a thing at one and the same time be both alive and dead.

Venial sin does not carry with it the same fatal consequences as does mortal. Although

venial sin is a violation of God's law, it is compatible with the continued existence of charity in the soul. Either the act is only half-deliberate; or the consent to the temptation was not full and final; or the fault itself was of a trifling character. In all these cases the malice of the act is not sufficient to involve a complete break with God. The man who commits even a deliberate venial sin does not thereby so reject God's service as to make the creature and not the Creator his last end. Only if he does this, does he expel from his soul the charity which unites him to his heavenly Father. Hence a man may be guilty of many acts of unfaithfulness, and yet not forfeit his privileges as a child of God.

St. John speaks of this opposition when he says: "Whosoever is born of God committeth not sin: for His seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9). Here the reference is primarily to mortal sin; and the apostle intends to impress on us the utter incompatibility of such sin and sonship to God: the commission of grave sin is the rejection of sonship. But the words appear to go yet further: they seem, at first sight, to imply that the child of God is incapable of sinning at all. They are, in all probability, to

be understood as signifying that so far as a man acts as a child of God, he will not sin; that it is because he neglects the promptings of grace that sin has any part in him. Thus St. Augustine, discussing this passage, tells us that grace will eventually expel all sin, though not during this life; as long as we remain on earth our deliverance is never quite complete; only in the life to come will the apostle's words find their complete realization.[1]

4. When God by the gift of grace raises a man from the state of sin to one of acceptance with Himself, He is said to "justify" him, and the process is called the "justification" of the sinner. Similarly sanctifying grace and the other spiritual endowments which accompany it are spoken of as "justice," and those who are in the state of grace are termed "the just."[2] This word, as is plain, has not the same sense in this reference that it has when it is used to denote the cardinal virtue of justice. In that case it signifies the habitual purpose of render-

[1] *De Pecc. Merit.*, ii. nn. 9, 10 (P.L. xliv., 156); *Contra duas Epist. Pelag.*, iv. n. 31 (P.L. xliv., 634).

[2] In the Authorized and Revised Versions the words "righteousness" and "righteous" are employed instead of "justice" and "just." This rendering has certain advantages; but if it be adopted, the connection of the terms with "justification" and "to justify" becomes obscured.

ing to each man his due. In the sense of which we are speaking it denotes the state in which the soul is healed from its ills and rendered acceptable to God. This theological use of the word "justice" goes back to St. Paul, who in many passages of his epistles treats of our justification. Much controversy, however, has centred round the precise meaning of the words in his writings ever since the days of Luther and Calvin; and it seems necessary to explain very briefly the points at issue.

Within the Catholic Church there has never been any doubt that St. Paul's meaning is that which we have indicated. He has ever been understood as teaching that man is justified by the infusion of sanctifying grace into his soul, that his justification is nothing else than the change effected in him by this gift, when through it his sins are forgiven and he is transformed into a new creature and made a child of God. The Council of Trent in its decree regarding the revealed doctrines of justification, defines it to be "not merely the remission of sins, but the sanctification and renovation of the inner man by the free acceptance of grace and the [accompanying] gifts; whereby man from unjust is made just, and from an enemy is made a friend of God,

that he may be 'an heir according to hope of life everlasting.'"[1]

Luther and Calvin, on the other hand, alike assert that justification is a purely external process. According to them, when the merits of the Redemption are applied to the soul, no internal change takes place in the sinner: he does not thereby become any better than he was before. The benefit which he receives is simply that, in virtue of the Passion of Christ, God no longer takes account of his past sins. They are covered by Christ's merits; these are imputed to him as though they were his own. On the ground of these merits God reckons him as just, though in himself he is as devoid of justice as he was before justification. This, they maintain, is the doctrine of justification set forth by St. Paul in his epistles. In one point, however, the Calvinist system differs from the Lutheran, and is superior to it. It teaches that after the purely external justification a process entitled sanctification commences, in which under the influence of the Holy Ghost the justified man gradually advances in piety and lives more and more to God. But both systems wholly reject the doctrine of sanctifying grace and of the regeneration and elevation of

[1] Sess. VI., cap. 7 (Denzinger, *Ench.*, 1913, n. 799).

human nature by its infusion into the soul. To both alike sonship to God is not a reality but a legal fiction.[1]

The discussion contained in this and the preceding chapter will have shown how unscriptural is this view, and how the doctrine of sanctifying grace runs through warp and woof of the whole New Testament. It appears in the Gospels as in the Epistles, in the words of our Lord as in those of St. Peter, St. Paul and St. John. The teaching is there for all to see, though time was required for the development of a technical terminology. The idea that when St. Paul speaks of justification, he has in view a purely external act on God's part, and that he regards justice as being ours only by imputation, is destitute of all solid foundation. One or two citations will render this perfectly evident. Thus in a verse which we have already quoted he writes: "According to His mercy He saved us by the regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost . . . that being justified by His grace, we may be heirs according to hope of life everlasting" (Tit. iii. 5, 7). Here our justification is definitely identified with our regenera-

[1] The Anglican Church makes express profession of the Protestant teaching on this subject in Article XI. of the Thirty-nine Articles. The majority of its divines adhere to the system of Calvin rather than that of Luther.

tion and renovation by the Holy Ghost. These, however, cannot be external to us. We cannot receive a new nature except by internal transformation. These words alone would be sufficient to convict the Protestant view of error. No less conclusive is the parallel drawn by the apostle between the sin which we derive from Adam and the justice imparted to us by Christ: "For as by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of One shall many be made just" (Rom. v. 19). No one disputes that St. Paul held original sin to be internal to us. The doctrine of Christ's office as the Second Adam, and of the removal of original sin through the justice that comes from Him—a doctrine insisted on in detail in the passage from which this verse is taken—becomes meaningless, unless that justice is also internal. If the parallelism between Adam and Christ is such as St. Paul teaches, then Christ must impart justice to the soul just as truly as Adam has transmitted sin.

It is plain that by denying the reality of sanctifying grace the Reformers struck at the very heart of the Christian religion. The rejection of that doctrine carried with it the rejection of such truths as our sonship to God, our membership in Christ, our deliverance from the

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power of sin. The old phrases might still be retained, and in fact were retained in very large measure, but they had been evacuated of all meaning. What remained was the mere stump of a religion. None can wonder that Protestantism as a religious system was from the very first destitute of all vitality : that, though of such recent origin, it is already in a state of decay, and seems destined eventually to disappear altogether.

CHAPTER III

MAN APART FROM GRACE

1. An Unendowed Humanity. 2. Original Justice. 3. Condition of Fallen Man. 4. The Gospel Message. 5. Modern Pelagianism.

1. We have seen in the preceding chapters that, in God's present dispensation, man is not left in his natural condition. He is the recipient of gifts altogether beyond anything to which humanity could lay claim: and through these he is destined to attain a supernatural beatitude. Here certain questions inevitably present themselves. What, we ask, is man apart from grace? What would he have been, if God had never purposed to confer on him either grace or the beatific vision—if, that is, He had given him the endowments proper to human nature, and these alone? And what is his condition as he comes into this world a member of a fallen race and stained with original sin? The answer to these questions will throw great light on the meaning of grace.

The benefit bestowed can only be adequately understood, when we realize what the human race would have been without it, and what its forfeiture by our first father entailed upon us.

What we have already said will have shown, that had God left man with his natural endowments alone, heaven, in the proper sense of the term, would have been out of his reach. He could never have enjoyed the beatific vision and seen God face to face. Human faculties apart from grace are destitute of all capacity for the possession of that supreme good. Certainly man's ultimate beatitude even then would have consisted in the knowledge and love of God ; for a rational nature cannot find beatitude elsewhere. But it would have been a knowledge and a love commensurate with his natural powers. He would, when his earthly probation was over, have been placed beyond the reach of temptation and of temporal misery ; and he would have enjoyed an ample knowledge of God and of His attributes, so far as He can be known by His created works. But the immediate and direct intuition of the beatific vision, and the ecstatic love and joy resulting from that marvellous prerogative, could never have been his. He would have received the reward due to a faithful servant: he could

never have been a child—a co-heir with Christ —sharing his Father's home and his Father's blessedness. As regards his life here below, man's state would have been very similar to that in which he finds himself at present. He would have enjoyed no immunity from sickness or from death. He would have had, moreover, to endure the same struggle with temptation which is his lot now. Our chief difficulty in this regard arises, as we are well aware, from the fact that our lower impulses are not fully and perfectly controlled by the rational faculty. Love, hatred, fear, anger and the other passions anticipate the commands of reason. The danger from this source may be lessened by the training of character and the acquisition of virtues, but it is never altogether removed: throughout life our passions need constant watching and the most rigorous control. This struggle between the higher and lower elements within us, is a natural resultant of our complex being. It would therefore have been present in the state we have supposed. One difference, however, there would have been. At present our victory in the struggle is made possible by grace; without grace it cannot be obtained. Had the supernatural gift of grace formed no part of God's purpose for

man, He would most assuredly have given us such assistance as we need, though the aid would not have come through an endowment imparting to us the gift of Divine sonship. It would have belonged to the order of nature, not to the order of grace.

In point of fact our actual condition is very far from this. We are born, it is true, without grace, and subject to all the miseries incident to unassisted human nature. But we are worse off by far than had we been born in what theologians term "the state of pure nature." We come into the world stained with original sin. To explain what this involves we must say something of the privileges bestowed on the human race at its creation, and of the forfeiture of these privileges by the Fall.

2. Man was from the first destined to a supernatural beatitude. The gift of sanctifying grace was bestowed on Adam. That this was so is the consentient testimony of the Christian fathers. Indeed so unanimous are they on the point, that the Council of Trent did not hesitate to include a statement to this effect in its decrees.[1] By his transgression, Adam forfeited the gift. Grace cannot remain in a soul stained with mortal sin. His sin was a grave

[1] Sess V., can. 1 (Denzinger, n. 788).

act of disobedience deliberately committed, and thus sufficed to deprive him of it. "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death," God had said to him. The threat was fulfilled to the letter. The act of sin extinguished in his soul its supernatural life, the life by which he was a child of God.

Together with grace our first parents received the gift of "integrity"—that is to say, the perfect subjection of the appetites to reason and of the body to the soul. In them there was no rebellion of the lower nature against the higher. It is in this sense that the Church has ever understood the words of Scripture: "They were both naked, to wit, Adam and his wife: and were not ashamed." When there was no temptation from the passions, there was nothing shameful in nudity. It was when the gift of integrity had been lost, and passion awoke in the soul, that man recognized that he must clothe himself or be ashamed. St. Paul clearly implies the immunity of our first parents from the unregulated movements of the passions. In the seventh chapter of Romans he reckons the concupiscence with which we have to struggle as being part of the sin which he has previously (chap. v.) declared to have entered into the world through Adam. "Sin,"

he says, "taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" (Rom. vii. 8). Concupiscence does not in itself amount to sin unless we consent to it; and its designation as such by the apostle in this context, can only signify that its presence in man is a direct result of Adam's fall.

The gift of integrity was bestowed on Adam in dependence on sanctifying grace. To forfeit grace was to forfeit integrity also. There is a natural congruity between the two. The full subjection of the lower appetites which integrity confers, and the consequent freedom from degrading temptations, are gifts which well befit the high dignity of the sons of God. Yet the two are not necessarily connected. There is nothing in the nature of things to prevent a soul from receiving the gift of grace, even though the complementary endowment of integrity should be withheld. Thus it is in our own case. Grace is restored to us in baptism; but we are not delivered from the burdensome struggle with our lower nature.

The state of our first parents as possessed of integrity and grace is commonly spoken of as the state of "original justice." The name is employed by way of contrast with the term "original sin."

3. God conferred these prerogatives on Adam with a view to their inheritance by his posterity. Had he persevered in obedience to God's commands, they would have passed from him to his descendants. Parents in transmitting human nature to their children, would have transmitted the annexed gifts of grace and integrity. When he fell, he forfeited them not merely for himself but for his race. If we can imagine a man to be destitute of some natural endowment, not merely through an accidental defect, but because the very tendency and title to the faculty in question had disappeared from his nature, such a man, it is plain, would not transmit this endowment to his children. The case, it is true, does not occur. Even though a man be born, say, blind or deaf, the deficiency is always due merely to some accidental malformation. The faculty has not been extirpated from the nature: the title to its possession remains. Hence in the normal course this man's children will be born with unimpaired powers of vision or hearing. But the supposition may serve to illustrate the case of Adam. Here it was not a natural endowment that was in question, but a supernatural gift added to the nature. Therefore, when the gift was forfeited, the loss was absolute: no tendency to it remained. It

followed that his children were born without it. Man came into the world not in original justice, but in original sin. For the essence of original sin lies in this, that man is born deprived of that sanctifying grace, which apart from Adam's sin should have been his. Moreover, with grace, man also lost integrity. He had refused obedience to God. As part of his punishment he was to experience the curse of rebellion within himself. His lower appetites were in full revolt against the control of reason. Where there had been harmony and order, there was discord and anarchy. From henceforth his life must be one long struggle against an enemy within the gate.

The condition of fallen man was indeed pitiable. He had forfeited all title to supernatural beatitude. He could not hope ever to enter God's presence and to be numbered amongst His children. It is true that he retained the full complement of his natural powers. His reason was not shattered, nor his faculty of free-will lost. He could see the path of duty and understand his obligations in its regard; he was under no constraint to follow the way of evil. But what prospect was there that he would long be able to avoid falling into grave sin? By the very constitution of our nature

the appeal which sensible pains and pleasures make to us, is more insistent than that of abstract principles, however weighty and venerable. And over and above this, fallen man must contend with the incessant stimulus of the lower nature. Under such circumstances it is morally certain that sooner or later he will yield. Yet he cannot plead that his fall is necessitated and inevitable. If it were so, there would be no sin in it. In each single case we are free: we can resist if we will. But, being what we are, it is inevitable that, unless God assists us, we shall before very long cease to do so. It is no wonder that, viewing human nature apart from grace, and considering the inability of the rational will to bring the lower impulses into subjection, St. Paul exclaims: "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. vii. 24). The body which carries with it those imperious appetites which drag us into sin, may well indeed be called "a body of death." Fallen man, if God had left him unaided, would have been far worse off than had he been created simply in the state of pure nature. In that case, as we have seen, he would have received help of the natural order to enable him to keep God's law. Now he had forfeited the supernatural aid of grace, and he

had nothing to make good the loss. His condition has been well compared by a recent writer to that of a man turned out of doors naked on a winter night. Of him, too, it may be said that he retains his full natural equipment. But none would esteem his lot enviable, or have much hope that he would survive.

God did not leave man without succour. Even when He imposed the penalty, He gave the promise of deliverance. Adam's sons from henceforth must come into the world under the sentence of disinheritance—degraded from the high estate to which they had been raised. But they were still to hope: for the seed of the woman should undo the evil wrought by the serpent. Moreover, though the actual coming of the Redeemer was long delayed, yet in anticipation of the promised Redemption grace was offered to all who by faith and repentance should return to God. From the very hour of the Fall man might, if he would, recover the supernatural life which he had lost: he might be once more a child of God with the prospect before him of eternal blessedness. Thus it came about that the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Law lived and died in grace, and are now, the Church teaches us, reigning in glory. They no less than ourselves found deliverance from

the bondage of sin through the merits of Jesus Christ.

What we have said will bring home to us how deplorable is the condition of the pagan world. There is something to appal the mind in the thought of those myriads of men who have never heard the Gospel-message, who know nothing of the Redemption wrought for them, nor of the gift of regeneration that might be theirs. Their state is all the more lamentable, because, with but rare exceptions, they have not the least idea that they stand in need of help. We do not wish to be understood as meaning that for these salvation is impossible. The Church is unhesitating in her teaching that none is lost save through his own fault. In a later chapter (Chap. XI.) we shall discuss in greater detail the position of the heathen. Here it is enough to say that the opportunities accorded to them are immeasurably less than those which are offered to such as by God's mercy have been made members of the Church. They have no access to those channels of grace which flow so copiously for all who belong to Christ's flock. In them original sin is not washed away by baptism; and no sooner do they reach the age of reason than, in the vast majority of cases, they stain their souls with actual mortal sin.

So far as they are concerned the havoc wrought by Adam has not been repaired. He brought his posterity under bondage to Satan, and in that bondage they are still held. The prince of this world holds them as his captives. They belong to that kingdom of darkness which Christ came to destroy; and in the kingdom of heaven which He set up on earth they have no part.

The actual state of heathen races, as experience shows it to us, bears out what we have said. St. Paul has described (Rom. i.) the condition of the pagan world which he saw before him—that world which possessed so polished a civilization, in which poetry and the arts had attained to such high perfection, and philosophy set forth such lofty moral ideals. All this notwithstanding, pagan society, he assures us, was corrupt to the very core. So great was its corruption, that men had ceased to regard their sins, however abominable, as blameworthy. They did not scruple to defend them alike in themselves and in others (Rom. i. 32). All that he tells us finds ample confirmation in many a page of Greek and Latin literature. Nor is it only of the civilization of which he was himself a witness that his words are verified, but of all human society in so far as it has fallen away from God. Man's passions are everywhere the

same, and when unchecked by grace have ever the same dark issue. No better illustration could be needed than that which is afforded by our own times. European society has in great measure rejected those Christian principles on which it was built up: and in so far as it has done so, it has experienced a similar moral corruption.

4. No one can read the New Testament without noticing that the tone of the apostolic writings is that of men charged with news almost too good to be true. The very name they gave to their preaching—the *Evangelium*, or "Good tidings"—gives expression to this conviction. They speak as men entrusted with the news of a tremendous deliverance, and commissioned to offer a favour so tremendous as to be almost beyond the mind's power to grasp. Joy is the characteristic note throughout. We may cite one or two passages by way of example. "We speak," writes St. Paul, "the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world unto our glory . . . as is written: That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard: neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 7, 10). And again: "To me, the least of all

the saints, is given this grace, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. iii. 8). And somewhat similarly St. John writes: "We have seen and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal, which was with the Father and hath appeared unto us. That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you . . . And these things we write unto you, that you may rejoice, and your joy may be full" (1 John, i. 2, 4). And in the same strain St. Peter says: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare His virtues, who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9).

The exultant tone of the apostles is not based simply on their hopes of future bliss. It has regard to blessings which were always theirs. They see themselves already in possession of "unsearchable riches"—of the "things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Nor could it have been otherwise. For the Gospel-message was nothing less than the restoration to man of that sonship which had been forfeited by Adam. It was the deliverance from a hideous servitude, and the elevation to a position of splendid privilege. There had, it is true, been the promise of deliverance. The memory of that promise had been preserved

among the Jews; and owing to the dispersion of the Jewish race, it had latterly aroused expectation in many lands. The preaching of the apostles made known to man that the Redemption was an accomplished fact: that the dominion of sin was broken: that the mercies of the covenant were no longer confined to a single people, but open to all races: and that all who should accept them were made sons of God. It is no wonder that such tidings as this filled the hearts of those who heard it with triumphant joy.

Not all the privileges of grace were restored to us. Man still remains liable to suffering; and the gift of integrity is withheld. But even these restrictions manifest the love of God towards us. Were suffering altogether absent from our lives, it would be only too easy for us to become satisfied with this present life; to have no desire for the joys of the next world and for the supreme joy of the presence of God. The existence of suffering detaches us from this world, and leads us to fix our hopes on the higher happiness of the life to come. Moreover, concupiscence makes hard fighting a sheer necessity if we are to save our souls. In this way we are compelled to the strenuous practice of virtue, and thus enabled to merit more grace and thereby obtain a higher place in heaven.

5. The truths on which we have been dwelling as to the state of fallen nature, and man's absolute need of Divine grace, if he is to control the rebellion of his lower appetites, belong to the very fundamentals of the Christian faith. They are amongst its most vital elements, whether we regard it from the point of view of dogma or as a moral system. They are insisted on alike in Scripture and in the whole of ecclesiastical tradition. Writer after writer points to the sad condition of fallen man as being the reason which led the Son of God to become incarnate for us, or appeals to it as a convincing proof, that, unless we constantly seek God's help, we shall perish miserably. A religion which should deny these truths would not be Christianity at all.

The rejection of the Church's teaching on these points is a characteristic feature of Pelagianism, a heresy which sprang up in the early days of the fifth century, and which was combated by those two great doctors of the Church, St. Augustine and St. Jerome. The cardinal error of Pelagius was his assertion of the absolute sufficiency of the unaided human will to fulfil the whole moral law. Man, he maintained, needs no Divine assistance to enable him to avoid sin: to admit that we lack power

in this regard, that by reason of original sin we are too weak to overcome temptations in our own strength, would be to deny the freedom of the will, and to fall into necessitarianism. Starting from this principle he was led to reject the whole doctrine of original sin. Adam's fall, he declared, may have injured us by example as being the first sin committed on earth; but it communicated no taint to human nature. Consistently with this, he denied that baptism was necessary to salvation. It doubtless conferred some privilege in the next life, or the Gospels would not have taught that it was requisite in order to enter the kingdom of God: but the infant who died without baptism would receive eternal life no less than those who were baptized.

The Pelagian system was condemned by Pope Zosimus in A.D. 418; and an explicit rejection of its errors was exacted from every bishop under pain of expulsion from his see. Twelve years later, in A.D. 430, sentence was again pronounced against it by the œcumenical council of Ephesus.

In a work like the present we are not concerned with the history of Pelagianism. But it seemed necessary to refer to it, because precisely the same errors are at the present day

widely prevalent. The idea that man's soul is disabled, and that in order to resist temptation he needs a new force infused into him, is, outside the Catholic Church, almost forgotten. Religion is reduced to the recognition of God's sovereignty and the observance of a certain standard of morality; but it is not supposed that there is anything in this beyond the scope of our natural powers. The idea that man comes into the world spiritually crippled, and that the religion of Jesus Christ can remedy his ills simply because it communicates to him a new principle of life, has disappeared. What, for instance, is the view taken of baptism by the vast majority of our fellow-countrymen? It is probably true to say that by most non-Catholics it is at most held to secure to the recipient a certain external favour on God's part. Many, certainly, regard it as strictly obligatory by reason of Christ's command. Yet even they do not consider that the rite confers any internal gift, and would very likely dismiss as absurd the idea that the child who dies unbaptized must remain for ever deprived of the beatitude conferred on those who have received that sacrament.

There is no mystery as to the source of these errors. They have their origin in a reaction

against the false teaching of the Protestant Reformers. Luther and Calvin grossly exaggerated the effects of original sin. They declared that it had so vitiated and corrupted human nature, that fallen man is incapable of the smallest good. Whatever he does, they said, is sin.[1] Indeed, according to Luther, even after justification, every act that man performs is stained with sin. The justified are saved, not because they are delivered from sin, but solely by the imputation to them of Christ's merits. A teaching so manifestly false could not but provoke a reaction. Experience teaches us plainly enough that fallen man is not wholly destitute of virtue: that even bad men are capable, from time to time, of good and generous actions. Hence it is no matter of surprise that those who have been brought up to believe that this travesty of Christian teaching is the teaching of Scripture as to human nature, should in preference accept the solution of rationalism and deny original sin altogether. But when sanctifying grace and original sin are both gone, what remains of Christianity is hardly distinguishable from pure and simple Pelagianism.

One of the most marked features of this

[1] *Cf.* Art. XIII. of the Thirty-nine Articles.

modern view of religion is the almost universal acceptance of the principle that one religion is as good as another. This is not looked upon as a matter admitting of argument or discussion. It is assumed as one of those self-evident truths which are beyond dispute: and the fact that Catholics deny it is regarded as a standing proof of their wrong-headedness. It is accepted equally by the sincerely pious and by those who are wholly indifferent to religious motives. The pious appeal to it as justifying their charitable hopes for the salvation of all. There are, they say, many roads to heaven: we must not condemn those who are not travelling along the same road as ourselves. The indifferent find in it an adequate excuse for the neglect of all religion. So indubitable does the principle appear to the modern Protestant, that nothing is commoner than to hear the opinion expressed that foreign missions are the most futile of enterprises. Why, it is asked, can we not leave the Mahommedan to serve his God in his own way? a sincere Mahommedan is just as likely to be saved as any Christian: to start a religious propaganda in a Moslem or pagan country may cause much political trouble, and can do no good to anyone.

It is, of course, manifest that if the Christian

religion has nothing more to offer to its adherents than a somewhat clearer knowledge of the moral law than is to be found in other creeds, there is much to be said for the objection. It might reasonably be doubted in that case, whether it is worth while to disturb the rooted beliefs of a nation in order to confer on it the problematic benefit of Christianity. Far better, it would seem, to try to induce them to observe the law which they already acknowledge as divine. The preaching of a new faith, even though it propose a higher ideal, may well cause more harm by the unsettlement to which it must give rise, than it will do good.

But in fact this new form of belief, is, as we have urged, not Christianity at all. It may be said without irreverence that it would not have been worth while for God to become incarnate and die upon the Cross, to give man a gift such as that. The true religion of Jesus Christ does not consist simply in an example of the perfect fulfilment of the moral law. It is a stupendous gift to our race—the transformation of our nature by grace, the elevation of man to the high dignity of a child of God. It alone comes from God, and it alone can bring man to eternal beatitude. All other religions are the work of human imagination, and are powerless to save

us. The Catholic missionary goes out to heathen countries knowing that he brings with him a boon that is beyond all price. Were the result of his life's work but to make a single convert, his labours would have been well spent. Without him that soul would never have obtained grace, but would have passed out of this life still in bondage to sin : through him it has been delivered from Satan and raised to be a partaker of the Divine nature. He has achieved a result of inestimable value.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES AND THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

1. Principles of Supernatural Action. 2. The Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity. 3. The Infused Moral Virtues. 4. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. 5. The Gift of Wisdom.

1. We have considered grace in its aspect as a new nature conferred by God on man and elevating us to Divine order. We have now to consider in what way that new nature modifies the activities of the soul—how far these too are elevated and transformed. It stands to reason that as is the nature, such must be the actions that issue from it. If the gift of grace places man on a new plane of being as a child of God, it follows that his actions too will be ennobled and will be of a kind which they were not before. The fruit must bear the character of the tree. The acts which flow from grace are not produced by mere human nature: they issue from man as incorporated into Christ, as a branch of the true Vine. The vital force ani-

mating them is the new life which Christ communicates to those who have been grafted into Him.

Here, as in so many cases, there is a striking analogy between grace and nature. When God calls a human soul into existence, He endows it also with principles of action, which we call faculties. He gives to it the power of thought and the power of free choice—intellect and will. In the order of grace something similar takes place. When God elevates our nature and makes us heirs of heaven, He gives us principles of supernatural activity. He does not simply confer grace on the soul, leaving its faculties precisely what they were and destitute of any corresponding elevation. He ennobles them also, and bestows on them appropriate gifts, so that actions of the supernatural order become their connatural effect. As the soul is never found without its faculties, so grace is never found without these related gifts. They are called the supernatural virtues. The word "virtue," however, when used in this connection, has, as will appear in the course of the chapter, a somewhat different meaning from that which it usually bears now, as *e.g.*, when we say of someone that he is a man of great virtue.

2. Chief among these supernatural gifts are the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity. Many passages of the New Testament make it abundantly clear that these terms are employed by the sacred writers to signify permanent principles of action, abiding in the soul, and bestowed by God as part of the endowment requisite to its new state. Thus in regard to faith, we are told that Stephen was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" (Acts vi. 3), and similarly that Barnabas was "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts xi. 24). In these passages the presence of the Holy Spirit is beyond question understood to be a gift which abides in the soul; and the parallelism between that presence and the virtue of faith implies that this is true also of the latter. The same conclusion may be drawn from St. Paul's words to the Ephesians: "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts" (Eph. iii. 14, 17); as also from the text of the Old Testament, which the apostle cites on more than one occasion: "The just man liveth by faith" (Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38). So, too, St. James tells us that a state of things may come about in which faith exists in the soul, but is as desti-

tute of fruit as is a dead tree. "Faith," he writes, "if it have not works, is dead" (Jas. ii. 17). All these passages—and more might be cited — clearly regard faith as something which, after the manner of a virtue, remains continuously in the soul, though it is not always in actual exercise.

A similar series of texts is found relating to charity. The epistles of St. John are in great measure devoted to this virtue, and throughout them it is treated as a permanent attribute of regenerated man. "God is charity," writes the apostle, "and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him. In this is the charity of God perfected in us that we may have confidence in the day of Judgment" (1 John iv. 16, 17). So too, St. Paul: "Peace to the brethren and charity with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. vi. 23); and elsewhere: "I beseech you, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help me in your prayers for me to God" (Rom. xv. 30). In all these verses it is implied that charity is a gift from God, an enduring disposition of the soul, resulting from the presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

The virtue of hope appears in more than one

passage in close parallelism with faith and love, *e.g.*, "Let us who are of the day be sober, having on the breastplate of faith and charity and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. v. 8, *cf.* 1 Pet. i. 21, 22; Ecclus. ii. 8–10). The three are connected in this way in the well-known words, which may be said to sum up the doctrine of Scripture on this point: "And now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor. xiii. 13). In this passage the apostle has just declared the superiority of charity to gifts such as those of prophecy or of tongues, and to the other charismata then so abundant in the Church. In these concluding words he tells us that, in contrast to the gifts just mentioned, faith, hope and charity are to remain. The words clearly signify that these three, not less than prophecy or tongues, are special gifts bestowed on Christ's members as such: but that, while a time should come in which the charismata should cease to be part of God's ordinary providence for the Church, these would at all times constitute a permanent element in Christian life.

The infusion of faith, hope and charity is so clearly part of revealed truth that the Council of Trent did not hesitate to make it a matter

of formal definition. It is therefore an express dogma of the Church that in justification we receive this threefold gift.[1] An opinion has been held by some theologians that charity and sanctifying grace are identical. On this point the Council pronounced no decision. But it is now commonly admitted that the contrary is the case: that, as we have already said, grace resides in the soul itself, while charity has its seat in the will.

It is easy to see what is the part played by faith, hope and charity respectively in the new life which we have received. It is through them that the soul directs its course to the supernatural end proposed to it, which is none other than God Himself as the object of our immediate knowledge and most intimate love. By faith we believe God's message regarding the world to come, and accept those unseen verities as the guiding principles of life. Hope gives us that confidence of attainment, which must support us in every step of the long struggle, and without which we should be incapable even of beginning it. By charity we love God with the love due to Him from those whom He has made His children. And charity it is that unites us to God, our last end; for

[1] Sess. VI., cap. 7 (Denz., 800).

love is a principle of union. The soul that possesses the beatific vision, is through charity linked to God for ever in the embrace of love: and even in this life charity has power to unite the soul to God, in the measure which is possible for those who do not yet behold Him face to face.

We have, however, yet to explain why it is needful that these virtues should be supernaturally infused into our souls? Are not, it may be asked, our natural powers sufficient for the purposes we have just mentioned? If God has given man a revelation, surely it is but natural that man should believe. And if in that revelation He has promised to aid us in attaining Himself as our last end, what is to prevent us from being confident that through His assistance we shall succeed? What, again, is to hinder us from loving Him? Why then should He endow the soul with special gifts of faith, hope and charity? In what way do they benefit us? We shall reply to this question by a brief account of each of the three virtues.

In the gift of faith the soul receives what we may term a permanent bent, inclining it to adhere to the truths of the Christian revelation. When these have once been accepted as God's own word on the authority of the Church, the

mind forthwith holds them with a certitude which excludes all hesitation or doubt of any kind. It cleaves to them, as it were, instinctively. It would be easier for it to reject the most evident natural verities than the truths of revelation. The certainty the soul has in their regard is so complete, that it spontaneously accepts them as the first principles of life. If one who has received the gift of faith should come to disbelieve, it will almost invariably be found that doubt has been freely, not to say forcibly, introduced into the mind: that the gift has been more or less deliberately thrown away.

We do not think that anyone who has experience of faith, as it is found among Catholics, will contest the truth of what we have said. Undoubtedly the Catholic, if ordinarily well-instructed, has ample grounds for his belief. But no amount of argumentative proof affords an adequate explanation of the assurance with which he cleaves to the dogmas of religion. Even though his life may have belied his profession, the certainty is there. When death draws near, it is at once seen that though his acts were sadly inconsistent with his belief, that belief is as real and true as ever.

In the ritual for baptism the priest addresses

the candidate with the words: "What dost thou ask of the Church of God?" and the candidate is bidden to reply: "Faith." The request may well have appeared strange to us. How can belief be given? And if it is an adult who is in question, surely he must already believe, or he would not be seeking admission to the fold. In view of what we have said, the meaning becomes clear. Certainly the catechumen, if he has attained the age of reason, must already believe with all his heart; but the sacrament of regeneration will confer on him the gift of faith—that permanent principle which renders his belief firm as a rock and secure against all storms.

Without this gift our faith would have little stability. The human intellect tends to disbelief; its native bias is to scepticism. No principle, however certain, is secure against its solvent force. It asserts its independence by questioning the validity of the most fundamental truths. Moreover, we are at all times tremendously swayed by public opinion. It is no light task to retain our belief in what is denied by the majority. And, speaking generally, the great majority of men will ever reject the Christian revelation: an age of faith is rare. Most men turn away from a doctrine

that imposes such rigorous conditions on those who follow it. With these hostile influences to cope with, we could not long keep our hold on the truths of faith, had not God bestowed this gift upon us.

As faith protects us from losing sight of the goal before us, so does hope give to us an enduring desire of reaching it, and a confidence of eventual success. Every act of hope is necessarily composite, containing these two elements of desire and confidence. And the supernatural endowment which God bestows implants in the soul a permanent longing to possess Him, and the assurance that through His assistance we shall attain our end. Both these parts of hope call for our consideration.

We have spoken of hope as being the desire of God. It is sometimes described as the desire of eternal life. The two expressions are equivalent: for to the Christian eternal life consists in the possession of God. If it signified no more than a continuance of our personal existence under conditions in which sorrow and suffering had no part, no supernatural endowment would be needed. Even the unbeliever would wish for this. But it is otherwise when the end proposed to us is God Himself. By nature man is so material in his desires, caring

so much for things of the body and so little for things of the spirit that the wish to possess God could hardly maintain itself in being. In the negligent and the sinful it would soon be extinguished. Yet experience shows us that in the baptized Catholic that wish is almost ineradicable. Even those who have neglected Him for long years retain the desire to attain Him: and often but little is needed to render that desire an effective principle of action. This, the Church assures us, is the fruit of the gift of hope.

Similarly, it is this gift which imparts to us the assurance of success. God has pledged Himself to assist us in the struggle. And hope is the reliance of the soul on God's omnipotence employed in its behalf. It thus becomes a spring of new vitality within us, enabling us to make efforts otherwise beyond us. Without a special endowment animating the soul with this confidence, we should soon lose sight of God's promises, and cease to rely upon His assistance. The recollection of previous falls, our repeated failure to carry out what we purpose, the apparent absence of any sign of spiritual progress—all these things tend to make success seem beyond our reach. We should give up the struggle as useless, and

desist from further effort. Yet notwithstanding that the possession of God is so far beyond the natural faculties of man, the soul which enjoys hope is buoyed up in its efforts after beatitude by a confidence far stronger than that which it could have felt regarding the attainment of its last end in the natural order. There is, it will be seen, a close parallelism between faith and hope. The virtue of faith gives to the intellect a certainty as to revealed truth, not less than that which it has as to first principles of natural reason. Hope confers on the will a confidence of attaining salvation comparable to that which a man of courage possesses as regards the successful achievement of those enterprises which he recognizes to be within the competence of his natural powers.

Faith and hope, however, are surpassed in dignity by charity, the virtue "by which we love God above all things and our neighbour as ourselves for God's sake." There are many different kinds of love. There is the love which is borne to each other by man and wife, the love of members of the same family, the love of fellow-citizens, and so on. It is readily seen that in every case love has its basis in the fact that in one way or another the lives of the two parties are associated together: and that the various kinds of love differ one from another

according to the different kinds of union on which they are founded. The union between brother and sister differs from that between natives of the same city or country, and that again from the union which binds together master and servant. The ground of love is different in each case, and therefore the love itself is of a different kind. Love is due to God from man simply on the score of creation, and apart from all consideration of the gift of grace: for the dependence of the creature on the Creator for all that he possesses, even for existence itself, affords a basis for love. But there can be no comparison between the love which has this origin and the infinitely higher love which is due from those on whom the gift of grace has been bestowed. They are more closely united to God than is the child to its earthly father. They have been made partakers of His nature and are destined to share His blessedness. It follows that they owe Him a love such as corresponds to the wonderful relation which binds them to Him. This love, in the very nature of things, is one which is beyond the power of human language to describe, beyond the capacity of the human heart to give. Only if God confers new and higher powers upon our wills, can we give to Him the love that such a union demands. In order that

we may be able to pay this debt, our souls together with grace receive the virtue of supernatural charity.

It should be observed that when we say that by charity we love God above all things, we do not except even our own selves. If our love for God is real, we care more for God than we do for ourselves. At first sight it may seem difficult to understand how this can be. Yet it is true to say that, even if God had left man in the state of pure nature, without either grace or charity, reason would have prescribed that he should love God above himself. For to the creature God is the sole source of all good. Whatever good there is in him comes to him simply and entirely in so far as he belongs to God; and apart from God he is cut off from all good. In view of this relation right order requires that man should love God first and foremost as the source of all his good, the end for which he exists, the ultimate motive of all his action: and that all other things, even himself, should be loved in reference to God, and in so far as they contribute to God's glory.

We may, perhaps, be helped to realize how the love of God can thus not merely outweigh but absorb the love of self, if we consider how the virtue of patriotism will lead men to give

their lives for their country. All men recognize that a citizen, who is worthy of the name, should be ready, if need arise, to make that supreme sacrifice. To his country he owes everything. She has made him what he is. Her past history and her national traditions are embodied in him. Through her, however humble his circumstances, he has dignity and worth. Isolated from her he would be a member severed from the body to which it belongs, a branch torn from the parent stem. Just as the hand instinctively exposes itself to danger to save the body, so will any good citizen be ready to expose his life to save his country. Not in himself, but in her, lies his chief good: and hence his love for her exceeds the love he feels for himself.

Often the welfare of the country or the tribe is visibly embodied in a single individual, *e.g.*, in the king. In that case love of country is centred in the person of the prince, and thereby acquires all that passionate intensity which only seems possible in regard of a personal object. History is full of examples of men who have given their lives without an instant's hesitation for the king or the chief who had this claim on their devotion.

All this applies in an immeasurably higher

degree to man in his relation to his Creator. There is no vestige of good, however remote, which does not flow to him from that Source.

Were not his mind clouded and his will clogged by sin, the love of God would, by an imperious necessity, be the ruling passion of his life: and the intensity of that love must increase with the measure of good which God has bestowed. If, then, in return for the gift of existence and blessings of the mere natural order, God's rational creation is bound to love Him above all things, the elevation of our nature by grace, the gift of a Divine adoption, demands that the love should be immeasurably higher. It is through the virtue of charity that we are enabled to pay that debt.

We have already insisted on the important truth that the soul in grace recognizes and accepts God as its last end. In other words, its ruling purpose is so to live as eventually to attain to Him. It is through charity, and through charity alone, that we can thus direct our whole life to God. Only if we love Him above all things, does He become our chief aim.

No other virtue but charity can do this. Hope cannot effect it. For though hope desires God beyond all created goods, it desires Him, not for His own sake, but for ours—that

we may be happy in possessing Him. By charity we love God for His own sake : if we love ourselves, it is because, in however small a degree, we too may contribute to God's glory.

So soon as charity has made God our last end, its influence is felt in every part of our life. Our main purpose, if we are in earnest, determines all our activities. In all our decisions this enters into our consideration ; and what is incompatible with it, we forthwith reject. Moreover, it thus becomes the office of charity to set the other virtues in operation. If God is our last end, we must practise the virtues that we may thereby please Him and achieve our aim. It is this which was in the apostle's mind when he wrote : "Charity is patient, is kind : charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up," etc. (1 Cor. xiii. 4 *sqq.*). He does not mean that charity is to be identified with each of the long list of virtues which he enumerates. Charity is not the same thing as patience or as humility. But where charity is found, there all these virtues will be found too : for it will call them one and all into action. Hence it is not without good reason that in Catholic theology it is customary to speak of charity as the queen of the virtues.

But it may be said that surely such a disposition is only for the saints. Can it really be the case that it is found even in the imperfect Christian, who has just made his confession and thereby recovered the grace he had forfeited by mortal sin? Does he really love God so well that this love furnishes him with the great motive of existence? The Church emphatically replies that it is so. However far he may have fallen, this is his state when he is restored to grace: and that he should pass out of this state it is needful that by a deliberate mortal sin he should have broken with God, and placed his last end in something else. When the sinner comes to confession, it is an essential condition that by a genuine sorrow for the past and purpose of amendment he should have cast out of his soul whatever is incompatible with the love of God. The sacrament of penance infuses both grace and love as abiding dispositions of the soul. Nor can the disposition remain idle and nugatory; it must issue in explicit acts.

Before we leave the subject of faith, hope and charity, a word must be said on their distinctive name of the "theological" virtues. The explanation of this term is to be sought in the fact that the acts of these virtues, and of these alone, have God for their immediate

object. It is God whom we know by faith, God whom we hope to possess, God whom we love. The acts of the other virtues may be done for God's sake; but the actual object is not God. If I practise temperance, the object of my act is the control of my bodily appetites as reason or faith prescribes; if I practise justice, my object is the rendering to each man his due. The only acts of virtue which tend immediately and directly to God in Himself, are acts of faith and hope and love. It is true that these virtues have also secondary objects. By charity we love our neighbour for God's sake; by hope we confidently look not merely for the beatific vision, but also for the means which are requisite to enable us to reach our goal; by faith we accept all the truths contained in God's revelation, and not those alone which concern Him in Himself. But the primary object of the virtues is God alone; the secondary objects only fall within their scope because of the relation in which they stand to God, the primary object.

3. In the judgment of most theologians, there are adequate reasons for holding that in justification not merely do we receive faith, hope and charity, but that the soul is further endowed with the full complement of moral virtues

required for its perfect equipment. These are commonly spoken of as the "infused virtues"; not that the theological virtues are not also infused, but that their relation to God has secured them a name peculiar to themselves. Amongst the infused virtues a special place is taken by prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, inasmuch as the four groups into which the virtues fall take their distinctive characters from them. For this reason they are commonly called the cardinal virtues. The infused virtues differ very materially from the natural virtues that bear the same name. The moral excellence which the natural virtues confer is that which befits a man simply in so far as he is a member of civil society. They aim no higher. The moral excellence of the supernatural infused virtues is that which befits a man as an adopted child of God, an heir of heaven and a member of Jesus Christ. The rule which determines the standard of purely natural virtue is unassisted human reason; the rule determining supernatural virtue is the revelation of God and the internal illumination of the Holy Spirit. We may illustrate the contrast in the case of temperance. The virtue of temperance, as the philosopher conceives it, is a control of the bodily appetites such as will best conduce

to the health of the body and mind, and thereby render the man a perfect citizen. Anything that falls short of this, or any ascetic practice which goes further, he reckons as a positive fault. The religion of Jesus Christ opens our eyes to a temperance of a higher order, which is not satisfied with merely controlling the appetites, but adopts the standards of Christian asceticism, "chastising the body and bringing it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27). The Catholic recognizes that the aim set before him is something higher than merely to be a perfect member of a civil State ; it is to be a perfect member of a heavenly kingdom. And he believes that by striving after the higher ideal, he will achieve the lower all the more adequately than if he had made it alone his object. The rationalist philosopher derides the austerities of the saints as mere blind fanaticism. The ordinary pious Catholic, even though he could no more hope to imitate the heroic penances of the saints than he could hope to paint like Raphael, or to write poetry like Shakespeare, nevertheless knows that it is the rationalist, and not the saint, who is blind. For he, too, possesses the infused virtues, and is striving in his own degree after that Christian perfection of which the saints afford the most glorious examples.

Here, however, a question suggests itself, similar to that we have already put as regards charity. In what sense can it be said that all the justified possess the infused virtues? Is it not only too evident that many a penitent sinner has no habits of virtue at all, but on the contrary not a few vicious habits; and that even with the help of grace, it needs every effort of which he is capable to hold them in check? The answer to this difficulty is not far to seek. As we said at the beginning of this chapter, the sense attached to the word "virtue" in this connection is somewhat different from that in which the term is commonly used. In ordinary parlance virtue signifies an acquired habit, rendering acts of the kind in question easy and agreeable to us. In theology it does not refer to habits such as these. It signifies an inclination or tendency given to the intellect or will, and conferring on them a capacity (*virtus*) for such acts. For the acquisition of the natural virtues we have sufficient provision apart from any special endowment. The intellect shows us what is good according to the laws of the natural order, and the will, if sound and healthy, follows the dictates of reason. But for the cultivation of supernatural temperance or fortitude or any

other of the infused virtues, nature is insufficient. We possess no inborn tendency in that direction; and lacking this tendency, we could never hope to acquire facility in their exercise. When we say that justification always carries these virtues with it, we simply signify that this connatural tendency invariably accompanies the gift of sanctifying grace. This inclination is perfectly compatible with a physical bias towards some fault, contracted by frequent falls. The task before the penitent sinner is little by little to drive out the vicious bias, and on the basis of the infused inclination to build up an acquired habit of a very different kind. In the early stages of his struggle the acts of virtue will be hard, whereas it would be easy enough to return to vice. Yet it is none the less true that he possesses the virtue, and that the contrary vice has been cut off at the root.

What we have said as to the justified sinner will explain in what sense it can be said that in baptism the infant receives the gift of the supernatural virtues. The undeveloped capacity of producing such acts is implanted in his soul. When reason dawns, if the passions are checked, and the lower nature is not allowed to prevail over the higher, the character will develop

along these lines, and the tendencies conferred in baptism will find their issue in Christian sanctity.

4. It remains to speak of yet another endowment bestowed on us with grace—viz., the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. The prophet Isaias, speaking of the promised Messias, says of Him: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety: and He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. xi. 2, 3). And the fathers of the Church tell us that not merely did Christ our Lord receive these gifts in His Sacred Humanity, but that He confers them in various degrees on all His followers.

Among the Scholastic theologians there was some discussion as to whether the seven gifts are to be identified with the three theological and four cardinal virtues. St. Thomas Aquinas, the most eminent amongst them, held that the respective series were far too different for such a supposition to be admissible: and that in such a matter the only safe plan was to keep as close as possible to the data of revelation. Hence he was led to assign a different office to the gifts from that which is fulfilled by the

virtues. Nothing has been defined on the subject; but the general tendency of theologians has been to accept the reasoning of St. Thomas. He points out that certain of the operations of the soul in a state of grace seem to require the presence of another principle of action besides the virtues. We know that the wills and minds of those who are united to God receive numerous impulses from the Holy Ghost, and are constantly producing actions due to His direct influence. Since this is part of God's regular course of providence, it would appear reasonable to suppose that the soul in grace possesses certain permanent dispositions rendering it responsive to the Divine impulse. This, therefore, is the office which with every show of probability is assigned to the gifts.

We shall point out later (Chap. VII., § 2) how important is the part which they play. Here it must be sufficient to note that the action of the gifts is complementary to that of the virtues in their respective spheres. Wisdom is the complement of charity; understanding and knowledge of faith; counsel of prudence. The gift of piety corresponds to justice: fortitude to the virtue bearing the same name: and the fear of the Lord, to the two virtues of temperance and hope. It would carry us beyond our limits to

discuss the gifts in detail. Something, however, must be said of the gift of wisdom, since it bears intimately on the subject of our next chapter.

5. The gift of wisdom is an experimental knowledge of God[1] having its origin in the love of charity. God has given us three ways of coming to the knowledge of Himself. The first is by the use of our natural reason: the second is by faith: and the third is the experimental knowledge of love. The gift of wisdom does not teach us fresh truths about God: it makes our knowledge of Him a personal knowledge. We have pointed out above that love of its very nature is unitive: that through it those who love each other are made one: and that the love of charity establishes even in this life a true union between God and the soul. It is in virtue of this union that we may enjoy intimacy with God, and possess in His regard the knowledge of experience. There is no need to labour the point that experimental knowledge is different in kind from that which is derived from testimony or from reason. The little child who has not yet the use of reason, knows his mother after this manner. He is too

[1] "Notitia experimentalis," *Summa*, 1a, q. 43, art. 5, ad. 2; I. *S.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2, ad. 3.

young to know *about* her, but his knowledge of her is none the less very real. He feels her love for him : and he returns love for love. If he is deprived of her, he sheds tears. St. Thomas when treating of the gift of wisdom, reminds us how wide is the scope of experimental knowledge. He points out that when the mind possesses it in regard to any subject, it can often dispense with reasoning and arrive at its conclusions instinctively. Thus in matters relating to chastity, he says, the man who has made a study of Ethics forms his judgment by process of reason ; while a man who knows nothing of Ethics, but who has cultivated the virtue of chastity, will reach a true conclusion, because he has, so to speak, attuned his soul to that of which he judges.[1] This truth holds good in many spheres. A man may possess a wonderfully accurate judgment in art or literature or music, who nevertheless can assign no adequate reason for its pronouncements. He judges, not by deducing conclusions from fixed principles, but instinctively.

This experimental knowledge of God is the foundation of Christian mysticism. It is not, as might be imagined, a privilege belonging to the saints alone. There is no one who is in a

[1] *Summa*, 2*a*, 2*ae*, q. 45, art. 2.

state of grace, who does not possess the power to attain some measure of this knowledge. We may be permitted to quote some words, written on this subject by a competent authority :

"How does it happen that the mystical knowledge that comes by love remains, for the greater part of Christians, but rudimentary and undeveloped? How is it that we have so little of that 'intimate, conscious, constant union with God,' which is the outcome of true love, and which constitutes the mystic life? Whose fault is it? God's or our own? Has God perchance failed to make advances to us and to show us the way? I answer emphatically, No! The good God has made loving advances to us, for there is not one of us who has not tasted, at some time or other, that God is sweet. It may have been when we made our first Communion, either on the day itself or after. At other times, again and again, God has allured us by making us feel the joy of being near Him heart to heart. Who has not had such spiritual experiences, and after all, when we look back upon our past life, are they not the happiest? Even Napoleon I., at the height of his glory, confessed to his astonished generals that the happiest memory of all his eventful life was that of the day of his first Communion.

"In reality, then, we have all had a taste and a beginning of the higher knowledge of God, the mystical experimental knowledge, communicated directly into the soul by God Himself. A taste and a beginning, but nothing more. Why is this?

"Because we have not kept up the loving intercourse with God to which we were invited. We are to blame: the fault is ours."[1]

[1] *The Mystical Knowledge of God*, by Dom Savinien Louismet, O.S.B. (London, 1917), p. 52.

CHAPTER V

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The Teaching of Scripture. 2. God's Presence in all Things. 3. His Presence to the Blessed in Heaven. 4. His Presence in the Just. 5. The Doctrine of Appropriation.

1. WHEN grace is given to a soul, the Holy Spirit takes up His abode within it: nor does He leave that soul, unless grace has been forfeited by mortal sin. The gift of His personal presence is sometimes spoken of as *uncreated grace* in contrast to the created grace with which we have been dealing hitherto.

There are few doctrines which are more clearly or more frequently taught in Holy Scripture than this of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the souls of the just. St. Paul again and again refers to it as one of the elementary truths of the Christian religion, known and acknowledged by all. It is this, he assures us, which justifies our confident hope of eternal beatitude: "Hope confoundeth not. Because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts

by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. v. 5). This, he urges, should furnish us with a tremendous motive for the conquest of sins of the flesh: for since God dwells within us, sins of this kind assume the character of sacrilege: "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God: and you are not your own. . . . Glorify and bear God in your body" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). This Divine Guest, he affirms, bears witness within us that we are indeed God's children, and inspires us with the filial confidence which our adoption warrants: "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear: but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, Father. For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 15, 16). Elsewhere, too, he speaks of us as having been "anointed" with the Spirit (2 Cor. i. 21); and in another place he calls Him "the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. i. 14).

These few citations and references will be enough to show how fundamental a place the doctrine holds in the apostolic teaching. The fathers of the Church are equally explicit. The following striking passage from St. Cyril of Alexandria, in which the gift of grace is attri-

buted to the presence of the Holy Ghost in our souls, is but one of many similar utterances, which might be cited. "When the Holy Spirit copies on our souls the Divine Essence, He does not do so after the manner of an artist, who paints something different from himself. Not in that way does He bring us to the likeness of God. But being God Himself, and proceeding from God, He impresses Himself invisibly on the hearts of them that receive Him as a seal is impressed on wax: and thus by their communion with and resemblance to Himself, He reproduces in their nature the beauty of the archetype, and shows man once again in the image of God."[1]

An extremely interesting passage on this subject occurs in the autobiography of St. Theresa. Her knowledge of the doctrine was derived in the first instance, not from any instruction, but from personal experience. "I was, at the beginning," she relates, "so ignorant that I did not know that God was present in all things. But since during this kind of prayer I found Him so intimately present to my soul, since the sight which I had of this presence was so clear, it was absolutely impossible for me to have any doubt on the point. Some persons

[1] *Thesaurus*, 34 (P.G. lxxv., 610).

who had not much learning told me that God was only present by His grace. I was so certain of the contrary that I was unable to accept their view, and it caused me some trouble. A very learned theologian of the Order of the great St. Dominic delivered me from these doubts. He told me that God was really present in all things, and he showed me how He communicates Himself to us. This filled me with the most lively consolation."[1]

2. Yet a difficulty at once suggests itself to us. God surely is present everywhere. His omnipresence or, as it is often termed, His immensity, is one of those elementary truths to which even the untutored reason bears witness. The child just learning the outlines of the faith finds no difficulty in understanding this. It would be necessary to go low in the scale of beliefs to find a religion which taught that God's presence was restricted to certain localities. In what sense then can it be said that it is the peculiar privilege of the just that God should dwell within them? In one and all of the passages which we have cited, it is assumed that the presence of the Holy Ghost is a gift conferred in justification, which they did not

[1] *Vie de Sainte Thérèse*, c. 18, traduction de R. P. Bouix, S.J., cited in Froget, *De l'inhabitation du S. Esprit*, p. 82.

possess before, that at that moment God descended upon them and took up His abode within them. Indeed Scripture expressly says of sinners: "The Lord is far from the wicked" (Prov. xv. 29). It is clear that this inhabitation of the soul by the Holy Ghost is something different from God's general omnipresence. It may be termed His extraordinary presence in distinction from His ordinary presence. And we shall be in a better position to understand its nature, if we first explain briefly the manner of His ordinary presence in creatures.

When we affirm that God is everywhere, that however vast be the space He has created or may yet create, He is in every portion of it, we do not, of course, regard God as being in space after the manner of corporeal things, so that one portion of His being is in one part of space, and another in another part. There is, indeed, a system of philosophy, widely held at the present day, which comes near falling into this error. According to Pantheism the universe is God manifesting Himself in phenomena. There is no ultimate distinction between the Creator and the creature. They are related as the thinker and the thought; and since it is held that the existence of the thinker without the thought involves a contradiction, it follows that

there can never have been a time when there was no universe. This theory, it is true, teaches that God is everywhere, but only in the utterly inadequate sense which we have indicated. From its principles it would follow that God is not whole and entire anywhere, but that He is, so to speak, distributed through the universe, which is not really other than Himself. Very different is the account of God's immensity given by the great theologians. They tell us that the distinction between the Creator and creature is absolute: that God existed before there was any space, for space is nothing but the dimensions of that universe which He has of His own free will called into being. But so long as that world exists, He is whole and entire in every part of it. For He must needs be acting in every being that exists: if He were not at each instant giving existence to all things, and enabling each one to exercise its due activities, they could not be. But where God is acting, there God is; the power with which He acts is not something different from Himself. Thus he is present everywhere as the universal cause of all things. It is thus that He may be viewed as being everywhere in space. He is not more widely diffused, because the universe is great: nor would He be bound

within narrower dimensions, were it smaller than it is. He does not need space. It is the things in space which stand in need of Him: for were He not acting on them, they would cease to exist.

We find it hard to imagine how God can be present whole and entire in all parts of space; for our imagination is limited by the impressions of our external senses. But an illustration, which may render the conception more easy, is furnished by the mode in which our soul is present to our body. The soul is in the body. But the soul is not extended: it is not distributed in the body so that it can be said to have parts. If we lose a limb, we do not thereby lose a portion of our soul. The soul is present in its entirety to every part of the body. The relation of the Creator to the created universe is, to be sure, different from that of the soul to the body. God is not the soul of the world. But the illustration, however halting, may assist the mind to grasp a truth which we cannot represent to the imagination.

As the universal cause of being, God is in all created things by *presence*, by *essence* and by *power*. He is in them by *presence*, because He acts and works in each: and where the work

is, there must of necessity the workman be. He is in them by His *power*; for the Divine power cannot be at a distance from the activity which it exerts. And He is in them by His *essence:* for in God essence and power are identical: they are not, as in us, distinct the one from the other. Since He is present by His power, He is present by His essence also.

3. Is there any other mode in which God can be present to creatures—a mode in which He can be present to some only and not to others? Yes: there is the presence which is granted to the Blessed in heaven. That presence is a presence by knowledge and by love. He can, if He will, grant to His friends on earth a presence of a similar character, so that even here the first faint dawn of the light of heaven shines upon their souls. Beyond these two there is but one other way in which God can be present to a creature—that which was realized at the Incarnation of our Lord, when He assumed a created nature into His own Personality. But with this presence—that of the hypostatic union—we are not here concerned. Our purpose is to speak of that great privilege of the justified which we term the indwelling of the Holy Spirit: and to show that by this it

is signified that God is present to the souls of the just by supernatural knowledge and supernatural love.

But, it will be said, surely this is not a real presence at all. A person may be present to me in thought and may be in my heart by love, even though he himself be far away or dead. The terms are, indeed, often employed in opposition the one to the other. We say of some one that he is present to our thoughts, thereby signifying that he is not present really. If we explain the indwelling of the Holy Ghost after this fashion, are we not reducing it to a mere metaphor?

The difficulty is a genuine one. It is, of course, true that so far as mere natural knowledge goes, the presence of an object in thought in no way involves a real presence. But it may be shown that this is not so in regard to the supernatural knowledge of God of which we are speaking. The full proof of this would involve us in a philosophical discussion unsuited to the present work. But the point is one of such profound interest that we cannot leave it altogether unnoticed. We must, however, be content to indicate in the briefest way how this conclusion is established.

When we say that presence in thought is not

a real presence, this is because the object of thought is not present to the mind in its concrete reality, but by an idea or concept. For me to perceive an object by my senses it must be actually present: it is impossible for the eye to see, or the ear to hear, or the sense of touch to feel things that are out of their reach. But for me to think of a thing the idea suffices. Indeed, even if the object is present to me and falls under my sense, the mind cannot know it without a concept. The judgments which the mind forms about the thing, are formed within itself and are, in fact, its concepts. In this lies the great difference between sense-perception and intellectual knowledge. The perceptions of sense are direct and immediate. I see the thing itself: I do not see my sight of the thing. Intellectual knowledge, on the other hand, is indirect. I know the thing by knowing the judgment formed with my mind. But, wonderful as it may seem, when the soul beholds God, it will know Him not by the aid of a concept formed within itself, but immediately and directly. Just as the eye gazes directly on the thing it sees, so will the mind gaze directly upon God. And just as when we see an object with our eyes, that object is truly present to us, so when the mind knows God, not mirrored in a con-

cept, but in Himself, God will be really present in a new way to the mind. In this way the knowledge of God which the Blessed possess in heaven is at one and the same time a presence to thought and most truly a real presence. He is not present to them vicariously by a concept, but in Himself.

That God should be thus known results from the fact that He is infinite in all perfections. Just as He is infinite in being, He is infinite in intelligibility. Other things are not intelligible till the mind by forming a concept of them has brought them on to the mental plane, and thus made them objects which thought can know. But God, just as He possesses existence of Himself, so also possesses intelligibility. In His case there is no need that the mind should supply the conditions which render its objects suitable for thought. Provided then that God bestows upon a soul the capacity to know Him, it can know Him without any intermediary concept. It can behold Him "face to face." This capacity to know Him, as was pointed out in Chap. II., is far beyond the scope of the natural endowments of any creature however exalted. It can only be ours through a special and supernatural gift—a new power infused into the soul. This gift is called *the*

light of glory—a term adopted by way of contrast to the light of reason and the light of faith, through which knowledge of God is granted to us here below.

It remains to speak of the supernatural love which joins the Blessed to God. Love is a unifying force. Without love we are self-centred. Love enables us to transcend the limits of self—to identify ourselves with another. We love another when we reckon him as one with ourselves, when his interests become our interests, and his good is as our good. It will, perhaps, be said that this union is a union of affection, not a real union. But, in fact, love, if it be genuine, does not stop short here. It demands a real union also. Friends who love each other well, crave for each other's society. A son whose life's work is abroad, will travel round the world that he may spend a short time with the parents whom he holds so dear. Love, says St. Thomas,[1] involves a three-fold union. It involves, first, the union which is its basis: for every love has its origin in some similarity or connection between those who love. Secondly, there is the union in which love consists—the bond of affection. And in the third place, there is the union which love effects: and

[1] *Summa*, 1*a*, 2*ae*, q. 28, art. 1, ad. 2.

this union is a real one. Supernatural love does not fall behind earthly love in this respect. Indeed, as it is the most perfect form of love, the union which it produces should be yet closer and more intimate than any which earthly love can bring about. And such, in fact, is the case. The soul which has received the Divine adoption and has attained to bliss, loves God, not as the Creator between whom and His creature there is an impassable gulf, but as the Father, who has raised it to share His own nature and has admitted it to intimate fellowship with Himself. God has given Himself to the soul, and by the love of charity the soul cleaves to Him as its very own. The two are united for ever by an indissoluble bond. Hence it is that the sacred writers do not hesitate to speak of the soul as the spouse of God. Thus St. Paul draws a parallel between the union of husband and wife on one side and that of God and the soul on the other. Husband and wife, he reminds us, do but become one flesh ; but "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17).

4. What has been said will, we believe, have shown clearly that we are not speaking in metaphors, when we say that God is present to the Blessed in heaven through knowledge and

love. This presence is in every way as real as His presence to all creatures as the cause which sustains them in being, and without whose aid they could exert no activity of any kind. It is a presence of a different order, but no less actual. But we have yet to show that even in this life God is present in a similar fashion to all who are in grace: that in virtue of the supernatural endowments which accompany grace they enjoy a personal union with Him, which is a veritable commencement of their future beatitude. This truth is expressly taught by Pope Leo XIII. in his beautiful Encyclical (*Divinum illud munus*) on Pentecost, in which he says: "That wondrous union which is known by the name of *Indwelling* differs only in regard of its state, from that by which God confers beatitude on those who have entered heaven." It is this point with which we must now deal.

As regards God's presence to us during this life, love plays the chief part. The charity which adorns our souls now is the same charity which we shall possess in heaven. Faith and hope will pass away; but the virtue of charity will abide. The gift through which we love God here, is the same as that through which we shall love Him in the next life. Even now

our love to God is the love of children to their Father. We are His, and He is ours. We do not, indeed, enjoy the glory and the beatitude appropriate to that high dignity; but the union is ours already. Certainly the acts of love which we shall be able to make in heaven will be far more intense than any which are possible to us in this life, in which our knowledge of Him is so obscure and imperfect. But they will proceed from the very same virtue. And wherever that virtue of charity is found, God has given Himself to the soul: He has chosen it as His spouse. Though as regards knowledge, "we walk by faith and not by sight," the soul that is in grace possesses God, and knows that it possesses Him.

Moreover, even though, while we live here, faith is a necessary condition of our probation, God has found a way to give Himself to us by supernatural knowledge. We have seen that wherever charity is found, there also is the gift of wisdom. The function of that gift is nothing less than this. Through it, as we saw, the soul possesses a personal and experimental knowledge of God. A knowledge of this character is, it is evident, a veritable presence of God to the soul. In certain souls it reaches a sublime degree. These are those who, by a special and exceptional

act of God's favour, have learned the secrets of mystical prayer, and have been raised, it may be, even to ecstatic love. Such, however, are at all times the few. But the privileges conferred by the gift of wisdom belong in some measure to all who are in grace. For each and all are united to God by love, and know Him, not merely by the hearsay of faith, but, in virtue of that union, by experience.

It is in this way that the greatest of the Church's theologians explains for us how God, who is in all things by His essence, His presence and His power, can nevertheless in a peculiar manner make the souls of the just His dwelling-place. He shows us that it is given to those who are in grace to know and to love God, not after the manner of mere creatures, but as those who enjoy the rights and the privilege of children; and that this knowledge and love constitute a veritable presence of God within the soul.

5. Is this presence peculiar to the Holy Ghost, or is it common to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity? Our Blessed Lord's words, "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him" (John xiv. 23) seem to teach clearly enough that all

the Three Persons are present. Further, it is a theological principle, universally recognized as certain, that in the Blessed Trinity there are no differences save such as are involved in those relations of origin by which the Three Divine Persons are alike constituted and distinguished. There can be no connection between these relations of origin, and any Divine action which is external to the Godhead. Hence it follows that all God's activity in regard to creatures—and inhabitation is such an activity—must be common to the whole Trinity. It is not the Holy Spirit alone, but the Three Divine Persons who dwell within our souls.

We need not feel surprise that the inspired writers should speak as though the office were peculiar to the Holy Ghost. Alike in Holy Scripture and in the works of the fathers certain attributes which are common to the whole Trinity are habitually assigned to one of the Divine Persons in particular. Thus omnipotence is specially attributed to the Father, wisdom to the Son, love and goodness to the Holy Spirit. We meet with expressions such as that the Eternal Father created the world by His omnipotence, through the wisdom of the Son and the love of the Holy Ghost. It would never be said that He did so through the wisdom of the

Holy Ghost and the love of the Son. This "appropriation," as it is termed, of a common attribute to a single Person, is in no way intended to signify that it belongs to that Person exclusively. It is a figure of speech, employed because the attribute in question is of such a character as to illustrate the special relation borne by that member of the Blessed Trinity to the other two Persons. Hence there is good reason why in theological terminology it should be employed of that Person alone: since by these specialized attributions men are helped to realize the central mystery of the Divine processions. The data of revelation seem to put it beyond doubt that the Son is begotten by an act of the Divine intellect, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son by an act of the Divine will. This being so, we can readily understand why wisdom should be appropriated to the Son, and love and goodness to the Holy Ghost, for wisdom belongs to the mind, while it is the will which is the source of love. God's gifts are the work of the Divine love; and grace is rightly reckoned as having a special title to be called God's gift, for it is an act of His generosity beyond and above the nature with which He endowed us. It is for this reason that our sanctification in all its

aspects, and above all the supreme gift by which He bestows Himself to dwell within us, is attributed in a peculiar manner to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

This explanation of Divine inhabitation given in this chapter, which is drawn from the pages of St. Thomas, is not the only one offered by Catholic theologians. It is a point on which various views have been held. But it does not seem too much to say that this is the only explanation, which, while it accords with all that both reason and theology teach us as to the nature of God, gives us an adequate notion of the tremendous privileges implied by the truth in question.

CHAPTER VI

THE ACQUISITION OF SANCTIFYING GRACE

1. Dispositions requisite for Justification. 2. Need of Actual Grace. 3. Sanctifying Grace conferred in Different Degrees. 4. Protestant Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. 5. Sufficient and Efficacious Grace.

1. THE means by which God bestows sanctifying grace upon our souls is, as we have seen, the sacrament of baptism. It is by this sacrament that a man is born again as a child of God. Moreover, the Church assures us that there is no human being who is not capable of receiving the benefits of baptism. The infant, in whom the powers of reason are as yet undeveloped, the idiot, in whom they must remain dormant throughout the whole of this life, may possess the endowment which opens the gates of heaven to them, no less than the man who enjoys the full use of his faculties. But the conditions in the two cases are different. Those who cannot exercise their free will are justified by the mere application of the sacrament. God does not

demand of them that which it is beyond their power to give. It is otherwise with the reasoning adult. For him the mere passive reception of baptism is insufficient. None of God's reasoning creatures, neither angel nor man, may enter heaven unless he is willing to co-operate in the work of his salvation. The sacrament will only avail him if he seeks it with certain dispositions of mind. In the first place he must have faith; he must believe God's message to man and His promise of supernatural life through Jesus Christ. He must also have a fear of God's judgments, a hope of His rewards, and a genuine sorrow for past sins.

It is easy to see why these particular dispositions should be required before grace can be infused into the soul. Apart from faith man does not and cannot know anything of the supernatural end for which God destines him: revelation alone can make this known to him. Unless he has heard God's message and believes it, it is out of the question that he should take a single step towards its attainment. No man strives to attain that which is totally beyond his reach. Hence faith, as the Church assures us, is "the commencement, the foundation, and the root of all justification."[1] Sorrow for past

[1] Trid., Sess. VI., cap. 8 (Denz., 801).

sins is no less essential. For the very purpose of the gift of grace is to unite our wills to God by charity. There can be no such union as long as our will adheres to that which God has forbidden. Unless we recognize the gravity of our faults and repent of our disobedience, there can be no room for charity in the soul. The love of what God forbids is incompatible with the love of God. Fear and hope are, normally, requisite in order to bring us to sorrow for the past. It needs a struggle to forsake our previous life and seek God ; and were it not for the fear of the tremendous penalties which God's revelation makes known, and for the hope of the rewards which He promises, we are hardly capable of the effort involved. It may indeed happen that in some favoured souls faith is immediately followed by love. If that is so, there is for them no need of explicit acts of fear or hope, or even of sorrow for the past : love would supply the place of all. If anyone loves God, his love contains equivalently the hope of gaining God, the fear of losing Him, and regret for past sins. But this case must be reckoned as altogether exceptional. Ordinarily speaking, men climb the ladder of sanctity by degrees. Fear first moves them to forsake sin : then the hope of a future reward exerts an ever increas-

ing influence upon them: and only after this do they recognize that God is more precious than His gifts, and so are led to love Him with their whole heart.

That the conditions of justification are such as we have indicated is the plain teaching of Scripture. We are assured again and again that there can be no salvation unless we believe in the revelation of Jesus Christ. "He that believeth and is baptized," says our Lord, "shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16); and again: "If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sin" (John viii. 24). Thus, too, St. Paul in answer to the question of the gaoler at Philippi, "What must I do to be saved?" replied: "Believe in the Lord Jesus; and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." As regards the necessity of sorrow for sin, we have our Lord's words: "Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish" (Luke xiii. 3, R.V.). And St. Peter, speaking to the Jews converted by the miracle of Pentecost, expressly declares repentance to be an essential preliminary to the grace of baptism: "Repent ye, and be ye baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus unto the remission of your sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 33, R.V.).

The importance of fear and hope appears from the appeal made to these motives in the preaching both of our Lord and of the apostles. The great alternative that lies before us—the glory and joy of heaven or the awful punishments of hell—is constantly urged by them as a means to bring men to abandon their sins and seek the justification offered to them. Thus our Lord exhorts His hearers to that profession of belief in Him without which justification is impossible, in the following terms: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that shall deny Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God" (Luke xii. 8, 9).

From the earliest days of Christianity the Church demanded these conditions of those who sought baptism after they had attained the age of reason. She admitted to that sacrament none save those who were prepared to yield an unhesitating belief to the Christian revelation as taught by her. The profession of the Church's creed has at all times been an essential part of the baptismal rite. Nor is she less insistent on the need of repentance. She exacts from the catechumen a solemn renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And she has always sought to bring men to desire the grace

bestowed in justification by instilling into them the fear of punishment and the hope of reward.

From what has been said it might perhaps be concluded that until baptism is actually administered, justification is altogether unattainable. This, however, is not the case. Baptism undoubtedly is, ordinarily speaking, the means by which the man who believes Christ's revelation and deplores his past sins, receives the gift of sanctifying grace. But if the believer is moved even before baptism not merely to repentance but to the pure love of God, if, that is, his sorrow is the sorrow of pure contrition, then grace is forthwith conferred upon him, and his soul is justified antecedently to the administration of the sacrament. Our Lord's words are clear on this point: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him" (John xiv. 23). This, of course, does not imply that those who attain justification in this way can dispense with baptism. The reception of the sacrament remains necessary by reason of God's command, because it is the gate leading to the reception of the other sacraments, and because it is the external sign of incorporation into the Church. But the Church has always recognized that

where actual baptism is impossible, its place may be taken by "the baptism of desire." If a man believes Christ's revelation and has a genuine love of God and a desire of receiving baptism, then, even though he should be cut off by death before its reception, his soul will be among the saved.

2. Faith, repentance, fear of God and hope of God are very far from being mere conditions, the fulfilment of which God demands of us as a preliminary to our justification, but without any internal connection with grace. They are a positive preparation of the soul for the reception of that gift. Faith in God's promise of salvation through Christ is the soul's first step towards its supernatural end, and fear and hope and repentance are the next steps in the same great journey. In theological terminology they are all of them works conducing to salvation (*opera salutaria*). Now it is a truth of revelation that man's natural powers are wholly incompetent to do anything towards the attainment of celestial beatitude. Man viewed apart from grace was destined, as we have seen, for a happiness of a less exalted character. His faculties, without a supernatural elevation, are not such as to enable him to pursue a supernatural aim. Even faith, the first step of all,

is God's gift. Thus St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: "By grace you are saved through faith: and that (*i.e.*, your salvation through faith) not of yourselves: for it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8); and elsewhere: "Unto you it is given for Christ not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him" (Phil. i. 29). Precisely the same teaching is found in the Gospels, where our Lord says to the Jews: "No man can come to Me except the Father who hath sent Me draw him. . . . There are some of you who believe not . . . therefore did I say to you that no man can come to Me, unless it be given him by My Father" (John vi. 44, 65, 66). Similarly when St. Luke tells us in the Acts of the Apostles of the conversion of the woman Lydia at Philippi, he says: "Whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul" (Acts xvi. 14, R.V.). What is true of faith is true of the other acts which lead on towards justification. St. Paul tells us in general terms: "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. ii. 13). This truth has been explicitly affirmed by the Church on several occasions. In the fifth century it was maintained by St. Augustine against the Semipelagians of Marseilles. These

men repudiated the heresy of Pelagius that man can save his soul without grace; but they contended that the first step towards salvation, faith, or at least the desire for faith, is purely our own act. The great African doctor showed that such a view was contrary to the express teaching of revelation. Since then the doctrine has been defined in more than one council. It will be sufficient for our purpose to quote the canon in which the opposite error is condemned by the Council of Trent: "If any one shall maintain that without the prevenient inspiration of the Holy Ghost and without His assistance, man can believe or hope or love or repent, as is required in order that he should receive the grace of justification: let him be anathema" (Sess. VI., can. 3).[1] The aid thus conferred upon us belongs to the order of grace; for, like sanctifying grace itself, it elevates our actions to the supernatural plane. Since, however, it is not the gift of an abiding state, but simply of a particular activity of the soul, and is temporary in its character, it is distinguished by the name of *actual grace.* It will be observed that in the decree just quoted, the

[1] "Si quis dixerit, sine præveniente Spiritus Sancti inspiratione atque Ejus adjutorio hominem credere, operari, diligere aut pœnitere posse, sicut oportet ut ei justificationis gratia conferatur: A.S." (Denz., n. 813.)

Church does not teach that belief as such is an impossibility without this supernatural assistance. Had it done so, it might be argued that, by the Church's own admission, there must be some want of cogency in the arguments for Christianity as they are presented to us: since otherwise they would be capable of convincing the intellect and producing belief even without a special assistance on God's part. The Church has ever maintained that the evidences for the truth of Christianity are amply sufficient for all minds. But it declares that belief produced without the aid of grace would not be such as to help to the attainment of justification. It would be of no more avail for that end than is that of which St. James speaks, when he tells us that "the devils also believe and tremble" (Jas. ii. 19).

The immediate effect of actual grace is, as we have seen, to produce in the soul those acts of the mind and the will which are the preliminary to sanctifying grace. Revelation does not inform us in what precisely it consists: and the point has given rise to some discussion. Some theologians hold that it is wholly constituted by the acts themselves. But weightier arguments, as it would seem, can be advanced for the view that it is a positive endowment tem-

porarily infused into the soul, elevating it to the supernatural order and determining it to the production of the acts in question.

Under the influence of actual grace the mind and will are moved, as it were, spontaneously to faith and repentance. Apart from any deliberate choice on its own part, the soul finds itself turning towards God. But God does not force us to accept His gift. In the moment when a man becomes conscious of these motions of his soul, he may, if he so chooses, refuse his consent to them, and choose the path of disbelief and impenitence. On the other hand, he may welcome them: in which case they are brought to completion no longer as indeliberate acts, but with the full and deliberate consent of the will. During the former stage, the supernatural assistance is termed *gratia excitans*: after the recipient has yielded his consent, it is termed *gratia adjuvans*.[1] Actual grace, it will be observed, differs from sanctifying grace in this important point: that its reception is not dependent on any preparation on our part. The sinner is not bound to produce certain

[1] *Gratia excitans* signifies literally "arousing grace." It is so called because its office is to arouse the quiescent faculty to supernatural action. But we have no generally accepted rendering for the term in English. *Gratia adjuvans* signifies "assisting grace."

definite dispositions in himself before he can hope to receive any actual grace. God gives His actual graces even to the greatest sinners, that He may bring them to repentance. Doubtless they are given more abundantly to those who pray and take the other means to which the Church exhorts men. But every step of this kind presupposes the gift. Were it not for the influence of actual grace within him, the sinner could do nothing to return to God.

3. It is a general principle that the degree in which a perfection can be realized is limited by the capacity of the subject receiving it. The principle is exemplified in many spheres. An artist may conceive the ideal of some picture. But the realization of the ideal will be conditioned by the materials at his disposal. He cannot achieve more than they admit of: if he has only one or two colours, he cannot depict some richly variegated scene. So, too, if a man sows seed in his garden, the character of the soil exercises a determining influence on the development of the plant. A perfect plant demands a soil adapted to it. Or to take our example from another quarter: if a man endeavours to impart some branch of knowledge to a boy, he recognizes that the result must be conditioned by the intellectual capacity of his

pupil: if he is concerned to teach him some feat of physical skill, his success will depend on the accuracy of eye and dexterity of hand that his disciple possesses. Grace, here, the Church assures us, follows the analogy of nature, and shows us the same principle operating in the supernatural order. In the case of those who obtain justification after they have reached the age of reason, sanctifying grace is not given in an equal degree to all. The amount bestowed depends on the manner in which they have disposed themselves for its reception. If they have used the actual grace given them to the best advantage, if their faith is fervent, their hope ardent, their sorrow for sin intense, they will receive it in ample measure. If on the other hand they have shown but little zeal in preparing themselves for it, and their dispositions scarcely go beyond the minimum which God requires, they will receive far less. It is otherwise, of course, with those who receive the gift in infancy through baptism, and who are not called to co-operate in the work of their justification. It is practically certain that to all of these is given an equal degree of grace in that sacrament.

4. Such is the doctrine of the Catholic Church as to the mode in which man, if he has

reached years of discretion, must attain justification. It seems necessary to add something regarding the Protestant errors on this subject, since Luther's teaching on this point is the basis on which the whole of his system was erected. We have already given some account of his teaching as to justification, and explained how, according to him, it does not involve any change in the soul of the justified, but consists solely in the imputation to him of the merits of Christ: that, in other words, God does not make us just, but reckons us as just by a juridical fiction. And we have pointed out that this strange doctrine was the creation of Luther's own mind: that there is no vestige of support for it in Scripture or in Christian tradition. As regards the mode in which man secures this imputation of Christ's merits to his soul, he asserted that one thing only was necessary—namely, faith. This is the famous doctrine of justification by faith alone, which is still regarded as unquestionably true by the majority of those who adhere to one or other of the Protestant sects. Faith, however, does not with Luther signify what Catholics understand by the term—viz., belief in God's revelation. According to him, man has faith when he possesses a confident trust that his sins have been

forgiven by God for Christ's sake. Thus, in the authoritative Lutheran formulary entitled the Confession of Augsburg, it is laid down as the accepted Protestant teaching that "men are justified for Christ's sake by faith, when they believe that they are received into God's favour, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who by His death made satisfaction for our sins."[1] As thus used the term signifies confidence in God's mercy rather than faith properly so called. A further fundamental difference between the Lutheran and the Catholic teaching is found in their respective teachings as to the function of faith in preparing the soul for justification. According to Catholic doctrine, as we have seen, faith and hope are supernatural acts, produced under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and exercising a renovating influence on the soul, which is thus rendered a fit subject for the reception of God's gifts. This preparation becomes complete when the soul rises from faith and hope to love. All this the Reformers denied. According to them there is no amelioration of the soul preparatory to justification. Faith is the sole condition asked of us: and faith exercises no renovating influence. It is simply an instrument by which

[1] *Confess. Aug.*, art. 4, fol. 13.

we secure the imputation of Christ's merits. To use Calvin's simile, it is comparable to an earthen pot, which, filled with coin, makes a man rich, but has no value of its own.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone stands or falls with the view that justification is purely external. The rejection of the one error involves that of the other. When it is seen that justification is not a juridical fiction, but a veritable transformation of the soul, and in all those who have attained to years of discretion a transformation that takes place voluntarily, it follows of necessity that the acts which prepare the way for it are acts by which a man forsakes evil and chooses good, and which thus dispose the soul for God's gifts. Moreover the texts which have been cited as to the need of hope and repentance show how erroneous is the contention that faith alone is required of us.

What, however, it may be asked is to be said as to the passages in which St. Paul appears to attribute justification entirely to faith? These, as all are aware, have ever been employed as the chief weapon in the Protestant armoury. Appeal is made to texts such as the following: "We account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law" (Rom. iii. 28);

"By grace you are saved through faith: and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man may glory" (Eph. ii. 8, 9); and "[Christ Jesus] was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1). If, it is urged, faith is but the first of several acts which God demands of us, and without them is powerless to procure our justification, the apostle could not speak as he does. Indeed he goes out of his way to assure us that we must not regard our good works as having any power to render us acceptable to God: he blames the Jews for this very error, that they did not rely on faith, but believed that their good works contributed to the result.

It would be idle to deny that St. Paul's words are open to misconstruction in the Lutheran sense. From the first, it would appear, some interpreted them in this fashion. Of some such error St. Peter seems to speak, when he says that in the epistles of his fellow-apostle "are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest as they do the other Scriptures to their own destruction" (2 Pet. iii. 16).

Yet when considered in connection with the remainder of his teachings, St. Paul's meaning is clear enough. He was engaged in refuting the teaching of the Jewish Rabbis, according to which man can find acceptance with God on the score of good works performed by his own natural powers. God had given Israel the law on Mount Sinai. Those who should keep the law—and man, the Rabbis maintained, can do so if he chooses—were just before God. Their justice was in the strictest sense their own: and for it they could claim a reward, as their due. God inscribed their good works in His book of record, and would most surely pay them that to which they were entitled. This view St. Paul declares to be utterly false. We cannot, he affirms, attain justice by our own good works. It must come as God's free gift through grace: He must renovate us and make us just: and the sole road to this justification is through faith in Jesus Christ. To the justification earned as a matter of right by works, he opposed this justification by grace through faith. But he nowhere implies that faith is the sole condition demanded of us. It is the primary and essential requirement which determines the nature of the whole subsequent process. Whatever else we do, we do in faith: whatever

we receive, we receive as Christ's followers. Hence the apostle is naturally led to speak of us as being "justified by faith." In a whole series of passages he makes it clear that the moment at which the gift of justification is actually conferred is the baptism of the convert: that besides faith repentance is needed as a condition precedent to its reception: and that without the subsequent practice of good works it will infallibly be lost. Indeed he expressly states that in those who are justified faith must be combined with charity, and must issue in works. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision: but faith that worketh by charity." To interpret the passages in which he declares that we are justified by faith, as though they signified that faith will effect this result without other conditions of any kind, is wholly to misunderstand their meaning.

It is worth noting that Luther did not scruple to falsify the text of Scripture in order to provide his doctrine with the support which the words of the apostle refused to give him. In the verse "We account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law" (Rom. iii. 28), he inserted the word "alone," so that in his version it ran, "We account a

man to be justified by faith alone," etc. The action was characteristic of the man.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone inevitably led to a widespread neglect of the moral law. It offered a cheap and easy way to heaven, without the need of the practice of those moral virtues on which the Catholic Church had insisted so strongly. History bears witness to the appalling moral corruption which followed the adoption of the new religion in those countries which made profession of Protestantism. Luther himself in later life often complained bitterly that the people who had received the new teaching were in every way worse than they had been before they forsook the ancient faith.[1] Never was there a case which presented a more striking verification of our Lord's words: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. *By their fruits you shall know them*" (Matt. vii. 15, 16).

5. Actual graces are distinguished by theologians into *Efficacious* and *Sufficient* graces. By a sufficient grace is meant a grace which confers on the recipient the capacity to form a particular good action, but which nevertheless

[1] See *e.g.* Grisar's *Life of Luther* (E.T.), iv. c. 24 (1915).

remains without effect, because he refuses to avail himself of it. An efficacious grace, on the other hand, is a grace which not merely gives the capacity, but which through the consent of the will, effects the good act in view of which God bestowed it. Thus we may suppose a case in which two men have presented to them the arguments in favour of the Catholic religion, and God by an interior impulse of grace moves each of them towards an act of faith. One rejects the impulse: the other believes. The former is said to have received a sufficient grace: the latter an efficacious grace. It will be noticed that efficacious graces have a right to be called "sufficient": for were they not sufficient, they could not achieve their result. But custom has fixed the sense of the words: and by a sufficient grace we always mean one which *de facto* is not efficacious.

These terms are often applied to graces considered as gifts of God destined in the Divine purposes to bring about this or that result. We are taught both by Scripture and by the tradition of the Church that God can by His gifts of grace procure the consent of any created will, yet so that the consent shall not be by constraint but shall be a free act. "The heart of the King," says the Wise Man, "is in the

hand of the Lord : whithersoever He will, He shall turn it" (Prov. xxi. 1). This truth is set before us by our Lord, where He says: "My sheep hear My voice . . . and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, which hath given them unto Me, is greater than all : and no man is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John x. 28, 29, R.V.). Here He declares that nothing can frustrate the Divine purpose regarding the salvation of the elect. If this be so, it follows that God must be able by grace to direct the choice of the will as seems good to Him. We are here, it is clear, brought in contact with the profound mystery of God's government of the world. Why in certain cases He converts the rebellious will to Himself and in others permits the soul to reject the solicitations of grace—these are questions as to which we must be content to remain ignorant, and to adore the dispositions of Divine wisdom. It must be enough for us to say with the apostle : "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God ! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways" (Rom. xiii. 33).

Though it was necessary to treat this point in the present chapter, the same principles hold

good for all actual graces, for those conferred on us when we are in the state of justification, as well as for those which we receive to aid us to the attainment of sanctifying grace.

The question as to how efficacious grace acts upon the will so as nevertheless to leave it free, has been ardently debated in the theological schools. The Dominican Order furnished the chief defenders of one view, the Jesuits of another. The controversy involves issues of no small importance; but since it does not immediately affect the revealed doctrine of grace, there seems no call for us to enter upon it here.

CHAPTER VII.

PERSEVERANCE IN GRACE.

1. Divine Aid Necessary for Perseverance. 2. Function of the Gifts of the Spirit. 3. Final Perseverance. 4. Avoidance of Venial Sin.

1. THE high privilege of sanctifying grace may be forfeited by sin. As long as a man lives, it is possible for him to renounce God's service and follow another master: our probation only ends with death. Hence the precious gift carries with it a very grave responsibility. We must guard our treasure vigilantly. Above all we must be resolved that when death comes—even if it overtake us suddenly and without warning of any kind—it shall find us children of God, and not servants of the devil. It will avail a man nothing to have acquired grace, if in his folly he flings the gift away. Indeed, those who receive the Divine adoption and afterwards renounce their sonship are in worse case than those who know nothing of the benefits won for them by Christ. "It would have been better for them," says St.

Peter, "not to have known the way of justice than, after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb has happened to them: the dog is returned to his vomit: and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. ii. 21, 22). In this chapter we propose to consider the conditions of perseverance.

It might seem that those who enjoy the gift of grace are fully equipped for the struggle against sin, and stand in need of no special assistance on God's part over and above the general providence due to all that He has made. They have been endowed with the virtues of faith, hope and charity. They believe what He has revealed: they desire Him above all things: they love Him as the supreme good—the end for which they were created and for which they exist: and they possess new and supernatural principles of action in the infused moral virtues. Surely, it may be said, they have in all this an equipment which will render them more than a match for the temptations that must befall them. Their weapons are adequate: nothing else can be wanted save a good will.

In one sense this is true. Those who are in

grace possess, absolutely speaking, the power to overcome all temptations. Even the smallest degree of grace confers strength capable of withstanding any solicitation to evil whether external or internal. But it is one thing to have the power; it is another thing to employ it. Notwithstanding our ample endowment, it is most certain that if God does not assist us in a special manner, we shall sooner or later yield to temptation and forfeit grace. For as we have seen, the gift of grace does not restore to us that complete harmony of our powers which belonged to Adam in the state of innocence. The lower elements of our complex nature are not, even in the regenerate, in full subjection to the reason, acting only with its permission. Desire and repugnance do not await reason's bidding. They drag us this way and that: and the rational will is taxed to its utmost to keep them under control. We are, further, often misled through the ignorance which is another of the results of original sin. Our judgment is clouded by concupiscence and by the false maxims of conduct prevalent around us. And there is yet another source of error in our complete uncertainty as to future events. The course which we judge to be the safest may lead us straight to the breakers

and the rocks. Exposed as we are to these many dangers there is no hope of our perseverance, unless God brings His omnipotence and omniscience to the aid of our weakness and blindness. Where He sees that the interior promptings, which are the normal effect of the supernatural virtues, would in our case be only "sufficient grace," He must supply what we lack and give us such additional assistance as will constitute an efficacious grace. He must make good the deficiencies of our prudence, directing our course and protecting us from unforeseen dangers. He must employ a special providence in our regard, removing from our path temptations which He sees would prove fatal to us. Or, if He judges best that we should meet the temptation, then the Holy Spirit must intervene, enlightening our understanding to see what is right, and inclining our wills to follow it, thus leading us to victory, where otherwise we should have suffered defeat. Thus St. Thomas says: "For the attainment of our supernatural end, towards which we are moved by our rational nature as perfected —though incompletely so—by the theological virtues, the power of reason by itself is insufficient, unless it be aided from on high by the inspirations and impulses of the Holy

Ghost: as it is written: *Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God* (Rom. viii. 14)" (*Summa* I., II., q. 68, art. 2).

The supernatural actions of the soul in grace, it thus appears, are not in all cases attributable to the infused virtues as their immediate cause. Many of them are due to actual graces which are sent us by God according to our needs, and which are so many special gifts over and above the permanent endowment of virtues which we can always use as reason may direct. These actual graces differ in one important respect from the actual graces bestowed on those who are destitute of sanctifying grace with a view to its acquisition. The latter have a two-fold function; they do not merely incite the recipient to a particular good work: they also temporarily elevate the soul to the supernatural plane, enabling it to perform a supernatural act. In the regenerate there is no need for any such elevation, for the man who possesses sanctifying grace is already a child of God. The actual graces conferred on him are simply impulses—motions impelling the soul to this or that act. It must not, however, be imagined that actions thus performed are not free, and that the soul is purely passive in their regard. Were it so, they could not be

reckoned to our account as good or evil. No act that does not proceed from our free will is imputable to us. The graces of which we speak put the soul upon the way to the performance of a free act; but the soul is under no constraint: it is in its power to reject the grace conferred on it.

2. It is here, St. Thomas tells us, the gifts of the Holy Spirit exercise their function. They render the soul responsive to the touches of the Holy Ghost: and when He impels us to some good action, it is through them that His impulse is received. In regard to the particular work of which we are speaking, viz., the protection of the soul in grace from the dangers inseparable from our present state, two of the seven, the gifts of counsel and of fear, play a part of very great importance and seem to call for special mention.

It belongs to our nature as rational beings that we should forecast the future, and shape our course in view of the ends we have at heart. Reason and faith show us the relative value of ends, so that we may aim not at some merely temporal good, but at our eternal beatitude in the possession of God. It is the office of prudence to select the most appropriate means for the attainment of this, as of every

other end. Prudence must direct a man in his choice of a career, in the formation of friendships, and in every enterprise, be it great or small, which he may undertake. Yet the powers of prudence have their limits: it cannot secure us altogether from error. Future events are, for the most part, beyond our calculation: even the wisest find that their best-considered judgments were wide of the mark. Here, then, it is that the just are assisted by the gift of counsel. Through it the Holy Spirit supplies what is lacking, and guides them to a right decision, where otherwise they would have erred. It need not, of course, happen that the decision thus formed gives to their undertaking the immediate success they would have wished. But it will help them to their supreme end: and compared with this, all else, as they themselves are the first to own, is of little moment. Thus human prudence, even at its best, needs the gift of counsel to perfect its work: and only those can be esteemed truly prudent who implore the Holy Ghost thus to help them as long as they remain amid the manifold dangers and temptations which beset them here.

Hardly less important than the gift of counsel is the gift of the fear of the Lord. The fear of God may be of two kinds—the fear of

offending Him or the fear of punishment. Both play their part in the work of our salvation. But it is the former alone—filial fear, it is called—which is reckoned as belonging to the gifts of the Spirit. This fear is proper to the sons of God. He is the Supreme Good, whom they trust eventually to possess as their own: and even apart from any thought of the punishments which He will inflict on sinners, they fear to separate themselves from Him by sin. Fear of punishment grows less and less as the love of God increases in the soul; but filial fear, the fear of offending so good a God, grows greater and greater. There is no man who has not again and again been saved from losing the gift of sanctifying grace by this fear. When temptation is urgent, when we are almost yielding, then God in His mercy moves our hearts by this fear, and the struggle ends in victory, not in disaster.

The gift of fear corresponds to the virtue of hope. The desire to possess God as our own finds its complement in the fear lest we should lose Him. But it stands also in intimate connection with the cardinal virtue of temperance. The attraction exerted upon us by the pleasures of sense in their various forms is so strong, that it is in their regard we most

especially need the graces conferred through this gift. Were the virtue of temperance our sole weapon against these temptations, we should not be equal to the struggle.

3. In connection with this subject the question of final perseverance claims particular attention. By final perseverance is signified continuance in a state of grace till the end of our earthly probation. All those who die in grace are said to receive the grace of final perseverance. The term is applied to the infant who only lives long enough to be baptized, and to the man who after a life of sin makes a death-bed repentance and is absolved *in articulo mortis*. These, however, may be viewed as abnormal cases. Ordinarily final perseverance involves two elements: (1) that its recipient should have continued for some length of time in a state of grace and in the practice of good works, and (2) that death should find him in this state.

Among the errors into which the Semi-pelagians fell was the opinion that a man's final perseverance depends wholly on himself. If a man is in grace, then no special Divine intervention, they maintained, is required to secure his perseverance: this depends on his own efforts entirely. To refute this opinion

St. Augustine wrote his treatise *De Dono Perseverantiae*, maintaining that perseverance is God's gift, and that without His special help given for this end it is beyond men's power. Our prayers themselves, he urged, furnish a sufficient proof of this. If perseverance depended, not on God's mercy, but on our own efforts, it would be idle to petition God to give it to us. We do not ask for that which we can have without asking. Another defender of Catholic doctrine of this point, in a document which has been recognized by the Holy See as a faithful exposition of the Church's teaching, enunciates the same argument in the well-known form *Lex supplicandi statuit legem credendi* ("The rule of prayer proclaims the rule of faith").[1] He appeals to the Church's liturgy which has come down from the most primitive periods of her history, and points out that in its prayers supplication is made that God will confer His gift on all the faithful. There can be no room for doubt that the prayers thus consecrated by the immemorial use of the Church are the accurate embodiment of her belief. Hence to suppose that we can secure perseverance by our own efforts without

[1] Indiculus, cap. 11 (Denz., *Ench.*, 139).

Divine assistance, is manifestly contrary to her creed.

A very little consideration will show us that perseverance in both its elements is a gift from God. What has been already said in this chapter will render this evident as regards continuance in grace. We have shown that we cannot hope to avoid a grave fall save through the help of a special providence and of efficacious graces conferred upon us on those occasions when God foresees that, if left to ourselves, we should fall. He is not bound to show us these favours. They are given to some, but not to all. And, as we have said (ch. vi., § 5), it is idle to seek to fathom the inscrutable mystery of God's dispositions in this regard. We cannot tell why to some He gives the efficacious grace which sccures their salvation, and permits others to reject His mercy and perish. We say, and truly, that the issue is determined by man's free-will; that those who perish, perish by their own fault. Yet the fact remains that God might, had He seen fit, have given efficacious graces to the reprobate, and might without injustice have bestowed on the saved graces from which, to their undoing, they would have turned away. We do not, and cannot, know why He shows mercy to these

rather than to those. So, too, in regard to the time when death befalls us. The hour of our death is in God's hands. He has warned us that it may come at any moment. That it should come when a man is united to Him by grace must be esteemed, not a right but a favour, a favour not bestowed on all. It is manifest how immense is the boon thus conferred, if we reflect that God's foreknowledge must in many a case show that were life prolonged, the soul would eventually fall into sin and be lost.

The Church assures us that final perseverance must ever be a gift on God's part: that no man, however many his good works, can claim that gift as his strict due. But she teaches also that it can be obtained with infallible certainty by prayer. In regard to this, as in regard to all other things conducing to our salvation, our Lord's promise holds good. "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John xiv. 13). By this, of course, it is not signified that prayers for this purpose are sure to obtain their object, even though we should after a time discontinue them and neglect the great affair of our salvation. We must pray for perseverance as long as our probation lasts: and we must prove

that we are in earnest by the diligent employment of those other means of grace which God has put at our disposal. If we do this, we need have no fear lest our prayer should remain unanswered.

4. In what measure can he who is in a state of grace rid himself, not merely of mortal, but of venial sins? This question is nearly connected with that which we have been discussing. It is true that venial sin does not in itself involve the forfeiture of grace. But negligence as regards such sins, if it be habitual and deliberate. invariably leads to a grave fall. It is easy to see that this must be so. If a man freely permits himself to yield to his lower impulses, provided the matter be not grave, those impulses will soon acquire a strength which will inevitably carry him to the commission of a mortal sin in some moment of stress. Let us suppose, for instance, that a man harbours a grudge whenever an offence, however trifling, is done him. Should such a person meet with anything like a serious wrong, there is little doubt that his bitter temper will flare up into a mortal sin of hatred. The inclination to resentment has been indulged to such an extent, that it is out of his control. Besides, all deliberate sin, even though it be

venial, has a blinding effect on the soul. Those who commit it quickly cease to realize the tremendous obligation of God's law. God is forgotten: and His voice speaking through conscience is hardly heard. When temptation assaults them, it finds them unprotected.

Yet no man can altogether rid himself of venial sin. Scripture assures us in express terms that no one, however advanced he may be in the way of sanctity, can attain to perfect sinlessness in this life. "If we say that we have no sin," says St. John, "we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8); and St. James tells us: "In many things we all offend" (Jas. iii. 2). So too our Blessed Lord has taught all His followers to pray daily: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." The words would have little meaning for the saints if they had no trespasses which needed forgiveness. The Church had occasion to define this doctrine as a matter of faith against its denial by Pelagius. He claimed that since man possessed free will, he could, if he so chose, avoid all sin both mortal and venial alike. So complete, according to him, is man's liberty, that every sin of whatever kind merits eternal punishment: no difference can be admitted between mortal and

venial. The Church utterly repudiated this appalling rigorism: and defined once and for all that there is no one even among the regenerate who can attain to such perfection as to be altogether free from sin.[1] This inability to serve God with perfect purity arises, it would appear, from the present condition of human nature. The appetites are ever impelling us to actions which involve some breach of God's law: and, unless reason be ever on its guard, we follow where they call. To all men it happens that from time to time the vigilance of reason slackens, and some venial sin is the result. One alone of Adam's race, by a special and peculiar privilege, lived a life free from the slightest stain of venial sin: and that was the ever-blessed Mother of God.[2]

Yet in asserting our inability to free ourselves entirely from the bondage of sin, we must distinguish between semi-deliberate lapses and those which are fully deliberate. It is one thing to be hurried into sin through lack of full advertence: it is another to offer God the insult of an open-eyed disobedience, simply because we know that the matter is light, and will not involve the loss of sanctifying grace.

[1] Conc. Milev., II., can. 7, 8 (Denz., 107, 108).
[2] Trid. Sess., VI., can. 23 (Denz., 833).

This latter class of sin is incomparably more blameworthy. And these faults should have no part in our lives. We are perfectly capable of eradicating them altogether. Moreover, even as regards semi-deliberate sins, we can make constant progress. The diligent practice of the virtues gives to a man an ever fuller advertence, and an ever completer control over his actions. If we will only make this our object in life, our falls will constantly become both fewer in number and less and less serious in their character. "The path of the just as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

CHAPTER VIII

GROWTH IN GRACE: (1) MERIT

1. Growth in Grace. 2. Merit: Its Possibility and Conditions. 3. Protestant Objections. 4. Relation of Charity to Merit. 5. Every Good Work of the Just Meritorious. 6. Measure of Merit. 7. Merit in Relation to Perseverance.

1. It is characteristic of man that he should attain to perfection by degrees: that his advance from immaturity to maturity should be gradual. This is true of him in every sphere. He is born into the world helpless enough. His various physical powers are present, but as yet they are latent and undeveloped. Only by slow stages, and step by step, do they mature. He must pass from infancy to childhood, from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to manhood, before his capacities find their full realization.

It is the same in the intellectual and the moral order as in the physical, save that here our advance depends far more on our free-will.

The principles of mental and moral life are given us; but it is only little by little that we store up knowledge and acquire virtue. And what is true of the order of nature is no less true as regards the order of grace. The gift of justification does not confer perfection. It gives us spiritual life, but not spiritual maturity. Our baptism is in truth a new birth. A principle of supernatural life is infused into the soul: the new man comes into existence. But here too the capacities of the new nature demand development. During the years which are given us, our chief object should be that these capacities should be realized to the full.

Again and again in the New Testament do the apostles insist on this truth that the Christian life is a growth—a growth in grace, in charity, and in the supernatural knowledge of God. Thus St. Peter exhorts his readers to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18). St. Paul writes to the Philippians as follows: "This I pray that your charity may abound more and more in knowledge and in all understanding" (Phil. i. 9). In another passage, speaking of the tribulations through which he was passing, he tells us that in the endurance of suffering "the inward man is renewed day

by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16). And in the epistle to the Ephesians he assures us that the purpose of the various graces bestowed upon the faithful is that we may all come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ . . . that doing the truth in charity we may in all things grow up into Him who is the head, even Christ" (Eph. iv. 13, 14).

The very nature of grace seems to postulate the possibility of such growth. As we have seen, our sonship to God is no mere legal adoption, regarding which it may be said that there is no room for more or less: that it is either bestowed altogether or not at all. By grace we are made like to God: and it stands to reason that this likeness can be rendered more and more perfect in us. No limit can be assigned as to which we can say that at this point the grace possible to a mere man is exhausted. Where measures of space are concerned, every advance made leaves so much less to be traversed. It is otherwise as regards knowledge and love. In these our powers increase in proportion to what we acquire. He whose knowledge is ample, will add to his store with a rapidity almost inconceivable to the man of meagre attainments: and the same holds good of love. Our advance can be stayed only

by the close of our probation, or by the ceasing of our efforts. The purpose for which God destines His rational creation is the possession of Himself. When the soul reaches this state, it has attained the goal to which the whole of its course was directed. It has reached its term. It is but to be expected that here the process of endowment will cease: that the degree of grace with which it enters on its possession of God will mark the fixed measure of glory which it is to inherit: that it has entered on a definitive state.

That this is in fact so, the Church teaches us. The whole of Christian tradition assures us that after death there is no opportunity of further advance: that the lot of the Blessed is determined for all eternity at the hour of their death. It is in this sense that commentators on Holy Scripture interpret our Lord's words: "The hour cometh when no man can work" (John. ix. 4).

It may indeed be urged that for the great majority of souls the hour of death is not the time when they reach their last end: that the debt incurred by past sins must be discharged in purgatory before they attain to beatitude. If we are to seek the reason why the soul has no power to advance in grace in the fact that

it has reached its term, how comes it, it may be asked, that the souls in purgatory cannot add to their store? To this it may be replied that these souls, now that death is past, no longer remain in a state of probation. They have finished their course: they have kept the faith: they have made good their title to a heavenly reward. If they are still detained from the enjoyment of everlasting felicity, this is not because for them the battle still continues. They are subject to a temporary delay due to the fact that the stains contracted by certain past sins are as yet unremoved. But their final lot is fixed: and so soon as the impediment is done away, they will enter on the inheritance that is already theirs by right.

2. There are, the Church teaches us, two ways in which we may increase our grace: (1) by merit, and (2) by the reception of the sacraments. We deal here with the doctrine of merit, reserving the subject of the sacraments for another chapter.

A work is said to possess merit when it deserves a reward. The Church assures us that, given certain conditions, our good works deserve and receive from God a reward of grace here and glory hereafter. Now it has often been urged by the adversaries of the Church

that such a doctrine involves the idea that we can stand to God in the relation of creditor to debtor, that God can be under an obligation to us. Those who argue thus overlook the fact that a meritorious work does not always put the person for whom it is done under an obligation, but only when it is of such a kind as to confer some positive advantage upon him. No one will dispute that when a father rewards a thoroughly obedient son, the reward is well-deserved. The father is in no sense a debtor towards his son: there is no question of strict obligation. Yet the recompense is given on the score of merit: for the son by his obedience has honoured his father. It is utterly impossible that God can be our debtor: our good works can bring Him no advantage. But they are none the less done in His honour, and on this ground they are truly meritorious. To put this same truth in a different way: in regard to merit we must distinguish the relation between the persons concerned on the one hand, from the relation of the work to its reward on the other. The work may merit its reward, even though, as regards the persons concerned, there is no question of debtor and creditor. Man owes all he has and all he is to God: and it is impossible that God should ever be in

man's debt. But He has ordained that man's attainment of his last end should depend on his good works : and, what is more, that there should be a correspondence between the work and the reward, that the one should be proportioned to the other. Against the doctrine as thus stated the objection has no force.

What, then, is required in order that an action should be meritorious? On three of the requisite conditions, viz., that the act must be morally good, must be free and not necessitated, and must be performed during the space of man's probation, there is no need to dwell. But, beyond these, theologians enumerate three others. The first of these is that a man must be in a state of grace. No one can merit a reward which lies wholly outside his sphere. A private soldier, no matter what his courage, could not merit the dignity of a minister of the crown. A servant, whatever might be his zeal in his master's service, could not claim adoption to sonship as his due recompense. Only those who are God's children can merit an increase of their Divine inheritance. Granted that we are sons of God, then it follows that our actions can really deserve glory. For glory is the end for which as God's children we are destined ; and we are to reach that end as the result of

our labours. It may, indeed, seem strange to us that, imperfect as we are, our actions can really be proportioned to a recompense which consists in the beatific vision. But the difficulty is removed when we remember that God reckons the value of actions which proceed from grace, not in view of the weak human nature of the agent, but in view of the Divine principle from which they issue. Secondly, the action must be done for the service of God. It is to God that we look for our reward: and those actions alone constitute a title to reward from anyone which are done in His service. Lastly, it must not be forgotten that good works do not give the doer any claim to a reward apart from God's decree that He will in fact recompense them. They do not act, so to speak, automatically. Apart from His promise to do so, God is not bound to give us anything; for we are not free to give or withhold our service, as we please. We already owe Him all the actions of our lives. We owe Him our service, as our Creator, our Preserver, our Redeemer. It is simply because He has ordained that so it shall be, that a reward is due to us. The doctrine of merit merely maintains that, granted it be His holy will to recompense us, then the reward is not out of relation to the

work done: inasmuch as an act done in grace is a precious thing not undeserving of a supernatural reward.

In this connection it may be well to call attention to a distinction which theologians draw between "merit of desert" (*meritum de condigno*) and "merit of congruity" (*meritum de congruo*). An action is said to merit by desert when the reward is proportionate to the work, and hence is not more than what justice prescribes that it should receive. In speaking of the good works of the just, it is in this sense that we have been using the term. Granted that God has promised that our works shall be rewarded, they possess a merit of desert in the full sense. Merit is said to be "of congruity," when though there is no proportion between the work and the reward sought, and hence no question of strict justice, yet the act is such as to appeal to the generosity of him for whom it is done and thus gives hope that he will recompense it. We shall see in the course of this chapter that there are things which God permits man to merit after this fashion, though they are outside the scope of merit strictly so called.

The passages of Scripture in which the doctrine of merit is expressly taught are very numerous. We select a few examples only.

St. Paul, speaking of our labours in God's service, says: "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labours" (1 Cor. iii. 8); and in another place: "Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of the inheritance" (Col. iii. 23, 24). Not less emphatic are the words of our Lord: "Behold I come quickly: and My reward is with Me to render to every man according to his works" (Apoc. xxii. 12). It is to be noted that the words employed in these passages for "reward" (*μισθόη, ἀνταπόδοσις*) are not words of general significance such as might be equally applicable if used of a mere gift. They are terms which distinctly imply a payment for work done. This aspect of the heavenly recompense is strongly emphasized in the words in which St. Paul, speaking of his approaching death, says that there is laid up for him a crown which will be conferred on him by the Lord, "the just Judge" (2 Tim. iv. 8). We could hardly look for a more direct statement that good works really merit the glory which God has promised. The same truth, too, is implied in those passages in which a parallel is drawn between the everlasting punish-

ments of the wicked on the one side and the everlasting reward of the good on the other. In each case, we are given to understand, God repays in accordance with the requirements of justice.

If good works give a title to increased glory—and on this point, as we have seen, there can be no manner of doubt—it is not less certain that they merit for us an increase of sanctifying grace. The one truth follows by necessary consequence from the other. Glory is the inheritance of the sons of God. It is due to the just in proportion as that sonship is realized in them. He who inherits an ample measure of glory is he who during the space of his probation has brought that sonship to a high degree of perfection, who has in very truth put off the old man, and put on the new, and has conformed himself to the image of Christ Jesus. But this is but another way of saying that he has obtained an increase of sanctifying grace. It is by grace that sonship to God is conferred. And it is by growth in grace and in the virtues that it is more and more fully realized. The Council of Trent did but give expression to what is the clear teaching alike of Holy Scripture and of the fathers of the Church, when it made this doctrine a matter of formal definition. Its canon on the subject runs as follows: "If any man shall say

. . . that the good works which the justified man performs through the grace of God and through the merit of Jesus Christ, in whom he is a living member, do not in very truth merit for him an increase of grace, [a title to] eternal life and, provided only he pass hence in grace, the actual possession of that life: and, furthermore, an increase of glory—let him be anathema."[1]

3. The denial of the doctrine of merit is one of the cardinal points of Protestantism. To hold that a man can in any way earn the crown of glory which he is to receive, is, asserted the Reformers, to do dishonour to the work of Christ. It is to His Redemption that we must owe all, and to maintain that our eternal happiness will be due to our own personal efforts is to rob Him of the glory that is His by right. Indeed, He has expressly assured us that however exemplary our lives may be, we have not on that account any claim to a reward. Did He not say: "When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you say: We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which we ought to do?" (Luke xvii. 10.) These words, they contended, put it beyond a doubt that no labours on our part, however heroic,

[1] Trid. Sess. VI., can. 29 (Denz., 842).

afford the smallest foundation for expecting any reward at all.

On this point, as on others, the Anglican divines accept the teaching of the continental reformers, and repudiate the doctrine of merit as a "Romish error." So representative a work as Bishop Harold Browne's *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* speaks as follows: "Even if we could live wholly without spot, and never offend in thought, word or deed, even so our Lord teaches us that such a spotless obedience would still leave us undeserving of reward. . . . Even if we could keep all the precepts we should still be unprofitable, having no right to reward, but merely to exemption from punishment. Something more than obedience to precepts is required, even for salvation" (p. 344).

It is not hard to see how little force there is in these arguments. The Catholic doctrine, as we have explained, attributes man's power of meriting entirely to the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. It was the sacrifice of Calvary that earned for us the grace which enables us to merit at all. We may well ask which doctrine does most honour to Christ—that which holds that the results of the Atonement were so great, that it restored man to the dignity of a child of God and conferred on him

the power of winning a crown of glory, or that which holds that while procuring man's forgiveness it was unable thus to elevate his fallen nature. Indeed it would be impossible to affirm more explicitly that our power of meriting is due entirely to Jesus Christ, than is done by the Council of Trent itself. In the very passage in which it treats of merit, we are reminded that the works which God rewards in us are, in fact, gifts bestowed upon us by Himself. After speaking of the increase of grace and glory to be thus obtained, it proceeds: "Yet this truth must in no wise be forgotten, that though so much is attributed to good works in Holy Writ . . . nevertheless far be it from any Christian man to trust or to glory in himself and not in the Lord (1 Cor. i. 31; 2 Cor. x. 17), whose goodness towards all men is such that He desires that those very things should be our merits, which are His own gifts to us."[1]

It is hardly necessary to point out what fatal effects the Protestant teaching needs must have on Christian life and practice. To labour without regard for the reward belongs to the highest sanctity alone. The great majority of

[1] Trid. Sess. VI., cap 16 (Denz., 810).

men need to be stimulated to virtue by the knowledge that their labour "is not in vain in the Lord." Neither in the order of nature nor in the order of grace do we achieve perfection at once. If we are told that our labours have no value, not one man in ten thousand will make the sacrifices which anything like high virtue entails. Assuredly this must be reckoned as being one of the most disastrous of Luther's errors.

4. It is the teaching of St. Thomas that charity is the directive principle of every meritorious act. By this it is not to be understood that the immediate motive of every such action must be the love of God. Were this so, our meritorious acts would be few, for it is plain that only a minority of our virtuous actions have God as their direct and immediate object. The greater number must be assigned to one or another of the various moral or theological virtues—to justice, temperance, humility, hope, and so on. We pay our debts because it is honest to do so; we govern our temper because self-control is right and anger wrong; we avoid display, because self-advertisement is incompatible with the humility which we know to befit us. In all these cases the immediate motive is the excellence of some virtue which

we desire to gain, or the evil of some contrary vice. But the influence of charity may be real and effective, even where it is not immediate. The immediate motive of my act may be the excellence of a particular virtue; but my ultimate purpose in the pursuit of all virtue may be to please God. Thus I may pardon an injury because I recognize the nobility of forgiveness and the hatefulness of the vindictive spirit; but I may at the same time realize that such acts are acceptable to God and may have the explicit or implicit intention of pleasing Him by choosing this course. Here, although charity is not the immediate motive of the act, it certainly exercises an influence upon our conduct.

Unless, urges St. Thomas, love exercises such a directive influence, our act cannot merit any reward from God. What is not done in His service cannot possibly have any claim to a recompense from Him. But unless an act is referred to Him as the end for whom we exist, and to whose glory all our actions must tend, it is not done in His service at all. Only those acts which in some way issue from love are thus referred to God: acts on which charity exerts no influence are done not for God, but purely and simply to realize some excellence in

our own souls—in other words, for ourselves. Even a virtuous act, if it should be done purely for self, could not claim a reward at God's hands.

5. It might be imagined that this teaching confines our meritorious acts to somewhat narrow limits, and makes it no easy matter to add to our stores of grace. This is, however, far from being the case, for a little consideration will show us that charity exercises an influence on every single good action that we perform in a state of grace. Provided only that the conditions requisite to make the act a moral act at all are present—provided, that is, that it issues from the deliberate choice of the will—then the act is performed under the influence of charity. This is true even though at the moment when we, doing the action, do not advert to the fact that we are doing it for God. Charity, as we have explained in a previous chapter, is the virtue by which we take God for our last end, and direct ourselves, all we are and all we do, to God. Without charity, our ultimate aim would of necessity be our own advantage. When our last end is determined by that first of all the virtues, God, not self, is the object for whom we labour and for whom we live: and there is no action in life which is

not affected by this fundamental change of aim. This far-reaching effect of the dominating purpose of life may be illustrated from secular affairs. If, for instance, a man's main ambition in life is to succeed at the law, this intention will determine his course in all its details. He will arrange his studies, his place of residence, his friendships, with this constantly in view. His recreations will be such as not to conflict with his great aim. Whenever he is called on to make a choice, this ruling purpose comes into operation; for what is incompatible with it must be set aside. We do not say that in all cases he consciously adverts to it. But it is ever present as an habitual principle of life; and anything that should be seen to conflict with it would suffice to make it consciously operative. In the same way those who have taken God for their last end, if only they are consistent, test every action by this standard, so that there is none in which its influence is not felt. Few men, it is true, are absolutely faithful to their temporal aim in all the details of life. Love of ease or of pleasure leads them to do many things which are hindrances and not helps to its attainment. And so it is with the justified, whose chief purpose is determined by charity. They are only too often faithless

in minor matters. Acts of this kind—acts which in some measure violate God's law, though they do not involve the forfeiture of grace—are venial sins. Those men whose every action is guided by charity, who subordinate every detail of life to its influence and allow no alien elements to find an entrance, are the saints of God.

6. Though all the good works of the just are meritorious, they are not all so in the same degree. It needs no argument to show that if a man forgives a very great wrong, his act is more deserving of reward than if he barely succeeded in restraining his temper when under some slight provocation. The measure of merit is determined by various conditions. (1) From what has already been said, it will be seen that the more intense the charity inspiring the act, the more it is worth in God's sight. Charity is the principle by which the action is directed to God: it tends to God in proportion to the intensity of the charity exercised in it. If, for example, we give an alms from the immediate and conscious motive of the love of God, seeing, as the saints have been ever wont to do, Christ in the person of the poor, and making the gift an offering to Him, the act is thereby rendered more meritorious than if we performed it out of

pity, even though that pity were under the general dominating influence of charity. (2) Again, merit is increased in proportion to the strength and promptitude of the act of will. When we do some good work with our whole heart, it is more precious than if it were, so to speak, unwillingly extorted. The man who serves God with reluctance does not reap so great a reward as he who serves Him with a ready will. (3) Lastly, the merit increases with the difficulty of the act. It is more meritorious, as we have said, to forgive a serious wrong than a trifling one: to practise self-denial in great things than in small. Here, however, a qualification must be made. The difficulty of an act, may, it is true, be lessened by the promptitude of the will. A diminution arising from this source does not lessen the merit: contrariwise, it increases it. The martyrs who went to their deaths with joy did not forfeit a jot of the merit of their act because their zeal for God's glory made the loss of all things seem light to them.

7. However ample may be the store of grace which a man's good works have won for him, there is one thing which he can never claim as being his on these grounds. We mean the gift of perseverance. Perseverance does not depend

on the amount of grace which we possess. Were it so, none would ever fall from a life of sanctity into sin. Yet we know that although this happens but very rarely, it does from time to time occur. Men have attained to holiness, and have afterwards by a lapse into sin flung away all that they have earned. For no matter how great the grace which we enjoy, our will is free. We merit the increase of our supernatural endowments; but we do not merit that we shall put these endowments to good use. There is but one thing which will secure this for us: and that is, as we saw in the last chapter, that in moments of stress, when God sees that temptation will be too much for us, He should send us special lights and special impulses of the Holy Ghost, to bring us safely through the hour of danger. Sanctifying grace and the glory consequent upon it fall within the scope of merit, as being the connatural result of good works. But there is not any necessary connection between a good work and an actual grace given to aid us in the performance of some other action. These actual graces stand to good works in the relation of efficient principles. They are not, like sanctifying grace, the fruit of some previous good deed. Yet though there can be no question of any

merit of desert in this regard, these graces are within our reach. They may be obtained by prayer. It is by prayer that God has appointed that we should secure our salvation. If our prayers are humble and constant, God will send us in the hour of need efficacious graces—graces which He foresees will avail to keep us in the right path.

Hitherto we have been speaking of perseverance in general. But what we have said has its application also to the supreme gift of final perseverance. Neither of its two elements can be the fruit of merit. We cannot by good works ensure that we shall remain faithful for the future, nor yet that our death shall occur while we are united to God by charity. In both regards it is God's gift. But prayer is the means by which He has ordained that the gift should be ours. He moves by His grace the hearts of those whom He "has chosen before the foundation of the world" to beseech Him through the merits of His Son to deliver them from the dangers which encompass them, and to bring them safe to His heavenly kingdom. And those who thus pray are not disappointed of their hope. The boon which they ask is bestowed upon them.

CHAPTER IX

GROWTH IN GRACE: (2) THE SACRAMENTS

1. Increase of Grace *ex opere operato*. 2. The Holy Eucharist as the Sacrament of Union. 3. As the Nourishment of the Soul. 4. Actual Graces of the Eucharist. 5. Daily Communion. 6. The Sacrament of Penance.

1. MERIT is not the only means by which the just may grow in grace. Just as it is through a sacrament that God bestows grace on us in the first instance, when we are made His children in baptism, so too He has provided that we should add to our store through the sacraments. Five out of the seven sacraments are "sacraments of the living"—a term denoting that they are intended for those who already possess the supernatural life of grace. Only baptism and penance have as their purpose to give life to the spiritually dead. It follows that each of the other five increases the grace of those who receive it.

Grace given through the sacraments is not

conferred in view of the merits of the recipient, but in virtue of the sacramental rite duly performed. The rite is administered in Christ's name. It is His act, executed by a duly accredited agent on His behalf. Just as in the days of His mortal life His touch was able to cure the diseased flesh of the leper, and His word had power to forgive sins, so to this day His actions have power to give grace to the soul; He still exerts within His Church a healing virtue, no less wonderful than that which went out from Him when He sojourned amongst men.

When grace is given in regard of merit, it is said to be conferred *ex opere operantis;* when it is given through the sacramental rite, it is received *ex opere operato.* In either case, it must be remembered, the ultimate source is always the Passion of Christ. It is to this and this alone that man owes all grace. If his actions can merit such a reward, it is solely because in virtue of the Passion, he is a member of Christ: the new nature gives his good works a new value. The sacraments on the other hand are, as we have said, Christ's own acts: they are channels through which He communicates grace to our souls.

Sacramental grace differs from the grace

obtained through merit in this important particular, that in addition to an increase of sanctifying grace and of the virtues, each of the sacraments confers certain special aids corresponding to the purpose for which the sacrament was instituted. That this is so is manifest: for each of the sacraments was designed to produce a particular and definite result in the Christian life. It follows that each must carry with it some special gift to bring about that effect. In the judgment of most theologians the gift is best explained by supposing that to every sacrament is attached the right to actual graces which will assist us in attaining the purpose of the sacrament. Thus baptism, over and above the habitual grace which it conveys, gives a title to the actual graces requisite to live the life of a child of God; confirmation acquires for us the aids we need to profess the faith with courage in the hour of danger; penance confers light to understand the malice and deformity of past sin and to grieve over it; extreme unction the spiritual vigour necessary to overcome the torpor of the soul which illness entails. The sacrament of holy orders carries with it special assistance in the celebration of Divine worship; and matrimony gives help to bear the trials and to

fulfil the obligations of conjugal life. Of the actual graces attached to the Eucharist we shall speak later in the chapter.

Although grace is conferred in virtue of the sacrament itself, and not in regard of the merits of the recipient, it must not be imagined that the rite operates purely mechanically, so that no matter whether our dispositions be good or bad, no matter whether it be applied with our consent or against it, we receive grace all the same. In the case of those who have reached the age of reason the reception of grace must be voluntary. It would be a useless thing to baptize an unconscious man at the point of death, if when conscious he had never desired baptism. Moreover, there must be nothing in the soul which is an obstacle to the entry of sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace cannot enter, if the will still cleaves to some grave sin and refuses to renounce it. If a man should receive a sacrament in such a frame of mind, not merely does he receive no grace, but he is guilty of the sin of sacrilege. No one can become the adopted child of God unless he has turned away from sin with all his heart, and sincerely desires to live the life of God's children. In the case of the sacraments of the living a yet further condition is required. These

sacraments are intended for those who are already in a state of grace. It is not enough that the recipient should have turned from sin and should desire forgiveness. None must approach them if he is conscious that his soul is still stained by some unforgiven mortal sin.

Few parts of the Church's teaching have been more misrepresented than the doctrine of the gift of grace *ex opere operato*. It is contended that it attributes a "magical" effect to the sacramental rites. This objection, which was first employed by Calvin, would hardly call for notice, were it not still urged by some prominent writers.[1] The characteristic of magic is that it is supposed to produce its effects irrespective of the moral dispositions of those who employ it. As we have just explained, the Church not merely affirms the need of very definite moral dispositions in those who receive the sacraments, but teaches that those who approach them without such dispositions commit a sin of the most grievous kind. In view of this fact the inanity of the charge is manifest.

Indeed although in the reception of the sacraments the cause of grace is the rite and not our dispositions, the latter play an even more

[1] *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma* (E.T.), viii. 216.

important part than we have hitherto indicated. They determine the amount of grace conferred on us. Just as we saw in the case of the man who first obtains justification as an adult (Chapter VI. § 3), so here also the measure in which grace is bestowed depends on the dispositions of the soul. It is another exemplification of the principle that the degree in which a perfection can be realized is conditioned by the capacity of the subject receiving it. Thus the man who approaches the sacrament of penance with a profound sorrow for past falls and an ardent desire for reconciliation with God, will receive a more abundant benefit than will he whose sorrow, while genuine as far as it goes, is somewhat wanting in intensity. In this truth the Catholic has the strongest possible incentive for the most devout and careful preparation for the sacraments which it lies in his power to give.

Among the sacraments it is the Holy Eucharist which has been given to us as the normal source of growth in grace. It alone of the five sacraments of the living is intended to be constantly received by the faithful. Through it they are ever adding to their store of grace. The other four do not furnish us with a regular supply of sanctifying grace after this manner.

Confirmation and holy orders are received once and for all. It is true that, provided we are in a state of grace, the actual graces attached to them benefit us very frequently. But it is only at the time of their reception that they convey an increment of sanctifying grace. The case of matrimony and of extreme unction is, practically speaking, the same. For extreme unction can only be repeated if danger of death supervenes once again, and matrimony if the previous union is dissolved by the death of one of the parties.

We have, however, another regular source of grace in the sacrament of penance. This in its primary purpose is a sacrament of the dead, intended to restore those who have lapsed into mortal sin to the inheritance which they have lost. But the living may also have recourse to it, and in their case the fruit of the sacrament is an increase of grace. These two sacraments, therefore, will engage our attention in this chapter.

2. The special purpose of the Holy Eucharist is to unite us to Christ. The very form under which the sacrament is bestowed proclaims this to be its object. We partake of the Body and Blood of the Son of God, that we may become one with Him. The external sign assures us

that our incorporation into Him is no mere metaphor, but an objective truth. On this point the testimony of Holy Scripture is explicit. St. Paul declares that it is through this sacrament that we enjoy membership in Christ's body. "We being many," he says, "are one bread, one body: all that partake of one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17). And our Lord's own words on the subject are equally plain: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him" (John vi. 57).

The union thus effected is spiritual not physical. The Sacred Humanity of our Lord comes into contact with our bodies only through the external species of bread and wine, and when the species have undergone alteration, it remains with us no longer. No one has ever taught that there could be physical union between the sacred elements and our bodies. Our Lord's presence with us under the sacramental veils is the instrument of our healing. But it is upon the soul that His power goes forth, and so far as our bodies are benefited, it is through the soul.

He has not left us in doubt as to the nature of the gift conferred upon the soul. It is, He tells us, spiritual life. In the discourse at Capharnaum in which He spoke of the gift

He intended to bestow, He said: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me" (John vi. 58). He is speaking it is manifest, of that life which has been our theme throughout this work, the life of sanctifying grace. But over and above grace this sacrament conveys to us in an especial manner the supreme virtue of charity. It belongs to charity to unite the soul to God. Only charity has power to effect that marvellous union of which we have been speaking, in virtue of which He abides in us and we in Him. Sanctifying grace makes us His members; but the union can only be perfected through charity.

The Holy Eucharist is, further, the sacrament of brotherhood with our fellow members of the Church. Indeed, this follows as a consequence from its function as the sacrament of union with Christ. That which joins us to the head must needs unite us to the members. The words which we have cited from St. Paul to the effect that all those who partake of this bread become one body, enforce each lesson equally. Moreover, the symbolism of the sacrament is no less expressive of our union with our fellows than it is of our incorporation into Christ. For the Eucharist is a common meal of the children

of God. We approach the altar as the table of our Heavenly Father. There earthly distinctions of nationality, of race, of class, no longer exist. We kneel before it as brothers, children of one mother, the Catholic Church, whom she has brought forth for God. There we are fed on heavenly food, which proclaims us as forming one family with all the just : not merely with the just of the Church militant, but with the holy souls in purgatory, and with the blessed spirits, whether angelic or human, who stand before the throne of God and see Him face to face.

From the earliest age of the Church, her writers have loved to trace in this sacrament the symbol of unity. They draw a comparison between the many grains of corn which have gone to the making of the bread or the numerous grapes which have yielded their juice for the wine on the one hand, and the Catholic Church formed out of many individuals drawn from the most diverse races on the other. This idea is developed by various authors. It is found in the early writing entitled *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*,[1] which is by many held to date from the first century and to be contemporary with the apostles themselves. In the third

[1] *Didache.*, c. ix., n. 4.

century it is employed by St. Cyprian,[1] and at a later date by St. Augustine.[2]

In this fruit of the sacrament we have a strong confirmation of what was said above as to its immediate effect being not merely to add to our grace but also to increase within us the virtue of charity. We noted when treating of that virtue in Chapter IV. that the charity by which we love God is the same as that by which we love man for God's sake. God is the primary object of the virtue: man, the secondary object. Hence the sacrament which unites our souls to God will also bind us to our fellows, and more especially to those who share with us in the high privilege of the Divine adoption.

3. If the Eucharist is viewed under its other main aspect, viz., as the supernatural nourishment of the soul, it appears no less clearly that its special work is to communicate to us those two greatest gifts, sanctifying grace and charity. Our Lord Himself taught us to regard it in this light, when He pointed to the manna in the wilderness as a type of this sacrament. As the manna was the support of the Israelites in their pilgrimage through the desert, so the children of

[1] *Ep.* 63, n. 13 (P.L., iv. 384).

[2] *Tract. in Joan.*, Tr. xxvi. 17 (P.L. xxxv. 1614); *Serm.* ccvii. (P.L. xxxviii. 1100); *Serm.* ccix. (P.L. xxxviii. 1103).

the New Covenant are to find support in a yet more miraculous food, as they journey through life towards their heavenly home. Yet there is one essential difference between the nourishment of our bodies by material food and the nourishment of the soul by the Blessed Sacrament. Material food is transformed into our substance. Our vital forces assimilate what is placed within their reach, and by the wonderful chemistry of the human frame, what was once the substance of some plant or some animal is transmuted into human flesh. It is otherwise as regards the spiritual food bestowed upon us in the Eucharist. We are changed into it, not it into us. By partaking of it we receive the nature of Christ. This truth is taught by St. Augustine in a beautiful passage, of his *Confessions:* "I found myself," he writes "to be far off from Thee in the region of unlikeliness, as if I had heard Thy voice from on high: 'I am the food of grown men: grow, and thou shalt feed upon Me: nor shalt thou convert Me like the food of thy flesh, but thou shalt be converted into Me.'"[1] St. Leo the Great gives expression to the same thought: "The participation of the Body and Blood of Christ works in us no less an effect than this,

[1] *Confessions*, VII., x. 16, translated by E. B. Pusey (1838).

that we are transformed into that which we receive, and that both in spirit and in flesh we bear the likeness of Him in whom we have died, have been buried and have risen."[1] At a later date Urban IV. (1261 - 1264), the Pope who instituted the festival of Corpus Christi, reiterates the same teaching in the Bull which he issued for that purpose: "This bread," he says, "is eaten but not assimilated, swallowed but not transmuted; it is in no wise changed into the consumer, but if it be worthily received the consumer becomes like it."[2]

Apart from this one vital difference, the effects of this heavenly food upon our souls are analogous to those which earthly food has upon our bodies. St. Thomas sums up these under four heads. Food, he says, sustains the body, increases it, repairs it, and is a delight to it: and all this does the Eucharist do for the soul. The Church has set her seal upon this teaching; for two hundred years later she embodied St. Thomas's words in one of the decrees of the Council of Florence (1439).[3] A brief consideration of the four points mentioned will

[1] *Serm.* lxiii. 7 (P.L., liv. 357).
[2] Mansi, *Coll. Ampl. Conc.*, xxiii. 1078.
[3] *Decr. pro Armenis* (Denz., 698).

show how they are verified in the spiritual order.

The body must be sustained by food or death will ensue, for the principle of life is not indefectible. So is it with the soul. The principle of spiritual life is the grace we derive from Christ. We must take heed that we remain united to Him, for if we sever ourselves from Him, we shall perish like branches broken off from the stem. It is the Holy Eucharist which maintains this union. It ensures a copious outflow of grace from Him to us; and thus it saves us from succumbing to the temptations which Satan lays in our path. More than this: when the body has proper sustenance, it acts with vigour and alacrity; it does not suffer from languor and lassitude. This too is true as regards the soul. Fortified with heavenly food we are prompt to perform acts of virtue; we do not faint or fail under the difficulties of our pilgrimage, but go forward rapidly on the path that leads to glory.

Food gives increased growth to the body, building it up from the immaturity of infancy to fully developed manhood. The Eucharist gives the like benefit to the soul. Through the Body and Blood of Christ grace and the virtues attain a fuller development within us; we advance to an

ever higher perfection. In one circumstance alone does the comparison here fail us. In the body there is a point beyond which no development can be looked for. The growth of grace and of the supernatural virtues only ceases when life itself is at an end.

The body, like all things in constant use, is ever suffering dilapidation. From time to time it receives some wound or injury; and even though no positive injury befall it, there is much wear and tear. Food provides the means of repair. If the body be nourished with wholesome food, wastage is made good and wounds heal. The soul suffers loss through sin; for there is no one who does not at least fall into many semi-deliberate venial sins, which lessen our fervour and dispose us for more serious lapses. The Holy Eucharist repairs the loss. The charity which it confers upon us issues in acts of love towards God. These restore the fervour which our falls have weakened, and little by little tend to heal the dispositions from which these falls spring.

Lastly, the Eucharist resembles good food in this, that it causes joy and delight. A healthy man experiences a sense of physical delight, when he satisfies hunger with good and sufficient food. In like manner the love which springs up in the

soul through the reception of Holy Communion is a source of joy and delight of a higher order. There is no joy greater than the joy of love; and the love of God is the deepest and purest which the heart can know. It is not without reason that Holy Scripture speaks of this inestimable gift as "bread having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste" (Wisd. xvi. 20), and as "wine to cheer the heart of man" (Ps. ciii. 15).

4. We have stated earlier in this chapter that the various sacraments carry with them not merely sanctifying grace, but actual graces corresponding to their respective purposes. The Eucharist is no exception. Over and above the habitual grace and charity which it confers, it stimulates the soul to acts of charity. Its reception arouses actual fervour—a tenderness of devotion quite distinct from the mere habit of the virtue. That this is so is sufficiently proved by the passages of Scripture in which it is spoken of as productive of spiritual joy. Such joy can only arise from the actual exercise of love, not from its habitual possession.

In virtue of these actual graces the Holy Eucharist produces as a secondary effect the forgiveness of venial sin. Venial sin, as we

have noted, quenches fervour and devotion in the soul; moreover, it entails a debt of temporal punishment to be discharged in purgatory. The acts of love consequent on the reception of Holy Communion remedy both of these evils. Not merely do they rekindle our flagging devotion, but they possess a satisfactory value as regards punishment. As long as we live here, our good works are one and all satisfactory as well as meritorious, and the degree of satisfaction which they contain is proportionate to the charity which inspires them. Satisfaction is nothing else than the reparation which we make to God's honour, and the greater the influx of charity in the action, the greater is the honour shown to God by it. Hence these acts of love, by reason of their fervour, go far to blot out the debt of punishment due to us. It is hardly necessary to say that we are not here speaking of venial sins to which the soul still fosters an attachment. No sin, be it venial or mortal, can find forgiveness unless the soul has turned away from it. And there can be no remission of the punishment till the guilt of the sin has been removed.

5. The Church desires that all her children should partake of the Holy Eucharist with great frequency: that thus they may be united

more and more closely to Christ, and that grace and the virtues may develop within them. It is evident that the more often they have recourse to this heavenly food, the more rapid will their spiritual growth be. A great step in this direction was taken when Pope Pius X. published his famous decree on the practice of daily Communion. In this the faithful are reminded that our Lord's intention was that His followers should communicate daily, and this, we are assured, is implied in His comparison of the Holy Eucharist with bread and with manna; for bread is the daily food of the body, and the Israelites received the gift of manna day by day. Moreover, it is of the Eucharist that the fathers of the Church interpret the petition: "Give us this day our daily bread." As to the purpose of this sacrament, the Pope warns us against supposing that it was intended to be a reward for virtue already attained. On the contrary, it is directed "chiefly to this end, that the faithful being united to God by means of this sacrament, may thence derive strength to resist their sensual passions, and to cleanse themselves from the stains of daily faults, and to avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable."

One of the main objects of the decree was to

correct a somewhat prevalent error to the effect that a somewhat advanced degree of sanctity is required to justify anyone in receiving the Blessed Sacrament daily. It teaches definitely that the dispositions requisite for daily Communion are absolutely identical with those which are necessary for weekly or monthly reception, while the good results to be looked for in the former case will be far more abundant. What these dispositions are it declares with no uncertain voice: "Although it is most expedient that those who communicate frequently or daily should be free from venial sin, especially from such as are fully deliberate, and from any affection thereto, nevertheless it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, with the purpose of never sinning in the future; and if they have this sincere purpose, it is impossible but that daily communicants should gradually emancipate themselves from venial sins, even from all affection thereto."

The decree has undoubtedly borne much fruit. None can be blind to the fact that wherever the practice of daily Communion has been adopted, the spiritual results have been little less than extraordinary; though, indeed, they have not been greater than what might have been expected to follow from the streams of sancti-

fying grace thus communicated to the faithful. Yet much still remains to be done, for those who approach the altar daily are still few in comparison with the full number of those in whose power it lies to avail themselves of this great privilege. It may well excite our surprise that any can be indifferent to the riches thus placed within their reach. Assuredly, were it not for our spiritual blindness, no Catholic who could thus daily partake of the Bread of Life would fail to do so.

6. The other sacrament which calls for our attention in this connection is that of penance. The primary purpose of penance is not to furnish fresh grace to those who are spiritually living, but to restore those who have lapsed to the sonship which they have lost. The supernatural sign is that of a judicial process. We rightly speak of the "tribunal" of penance. In every duly organized State there are tribunals to take cognizance of grave violations of the law. The Church, Christ's kingdom, is no exception. He has set up the tribunal of penance for this end. But there is a wide difference between it and the tribunals of secular States. They deal with crimes as they affect social order, and their object, in consequence, is to vindicate the law by the infliction

of punishment. Penance deals with man's falls, not as affecting external order, but in view of the breach they have made between the soul and God. Hence its chief object is not to punish, but to reconcile. The only way in which reconciliation is possible for the man who has fallen into grave sin, is that he should repent of his fall and receive again at God's hands the gift of sanctifying grace. Only when grace is once more infused into his soul does he again become a child of God. The sacrament of penance was instituted for this end. It is the means provided by our Lord that the sinner may recover the grace he has forfeited.

Yet though penance is primarily intended for the forgiveness of mortal sin, venial sins are not excluded from its scope. All breaches of God's law may be submitted to it. Those who are already in grace may avail themselves of it for their daily faults. Thus it comes about that in this sacrament of the dead we have yet another means besides the Holy Eucharist through which we may be ever adding to our stores of grace. The measure of the gift bestowed will depend, as we have seen, on the dispositions with which we approach the sacrament. Here the dispositions requisite are

sorrow for the faults we confess and a purpose that by God's help we will avoid them for the future. In proportion to the reality and the intensity of our sorrow and our purpose of amendment will be the measure of grace which the sacrament conveys to our soul.

CHAPTER X

THE LOSS AND RECOVERY OF GRACE

1. Mortal Sin and its Effects. 2. Restoration possible for All. 3. Contrition and Attrition. 4. The Debt of Temporal Punishment. 5. Recovery of Merits. 6. Effects of Venial Sin.

1. THERE is but one thing which can drive sanctifying grace from the soul, viz., mortal sin. Indeed, it is so called for no other reason than that it has this power of destroying our supernatural life. Every mortal sin, of whatever kind, produces this result. A fully deliberate violation of God's law in a grave matter involves the rejection of God as our last end. It is an act of formal rebellion against His authority. By such an act, it is plain, the sinner of necessity forfeits the virtue of charity. Those who possess charity love God above all things: that is, they direct their lives to Him as their last end. When a man shakes off the yoke of God's authority, he thereby makes self-grati-

fication his end instead of God, and in so doing deprives himself of charity. The loss of charity involves the loss of grace. We cannot keep the one without the other. We cannot reject God as our end, and yet remain His adopted children. On the other hand, there are less grievous sins which do not involve the rejection of God's service. They are, it may be, only half-deliberate, or the matter of the sin is trifling. The note of full and formal rebellion is lacking to them. They do not expel charity, and are compatible with the presence of grace. These are termed venial sins.

It is unnecessary to dwell in any great detail on all that is implied by the death of the soul. Besides grace and charity, we lose the infused moral virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. We become incapable of meriting by good works. We forfeit the merits we have already accumulated. The works by which we gained them cannot exercise their due effect so long as the obstacle of mortal sin bars the way, any more than the sun's rays can find their way to us if their passage is barred by an opaque body. More dreadful than all, we lie under sentence of damnation; nor can we escape that fate, unless God pardons our sin and restores grace to our soul. Two supernatural

habits, indeed, God in His mercy permits us to retain—the virtues of faith and hope. These are only expelled by the sins directly contrary to them, viz., infidelity and despair.

As regards man's relation to God mortal sin places him in the state of guilt. A soul is said to be in this state if God still reckons to its charge the moral evil by which it offended Him. So long as this accountability rests upon the sinner, guilt cleaves to him; the offence remains. It is plain that there can be no removal of guilt till he shall have retracted his act and endeavoured in some way to make amends for it. Since the soul in this condition remains turned away from God guilt is often described simply as the state of aversion from God as our last end. So, too, the remission of guilt may be viewed either as the cancelling of the imputation of sin, or as the conversion of the soul anew to its last end. The restoration to the state of grace has both these results. Where grace and charity are, there the soul is united to God: nor is there any further question of the imputation of sin. Nothing but the infusion of grace can remove guilt. For God has so ordered that a man must either be in a state of grace or in mortal sin. His soul cannot be united to God while still remaining in the natural order. He

must attain God as his supernatural end or not at all. There is no middle course save for those infants who die unbaptized, but before they are capable of grave sin.

2. The Church is emphatic in declaring that no fall, however great, is such as to render a return to grace impossible. In this she does but teach what is contained in numerous passages of Scripture. Thus St. Peter writes: "The Lord . . . dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (2. Pet. iii. 9). Nowhere, indeed, is this consoling truth more forcibly expressed than in the parable of the Prodigal Son. In that character we have represented to us the sinner who has cast aside his sonship to God, and by his own act has put a great distance between himself and God's love. Yet no sooner does he seek to be reconciled to his Father than the robe of grace is restored to him, and he is made a partaker in the heavenly banquet which is the prerogative of God's children.

Repentance is God's gift. The sinner deprived of sanctifying grace cannot by his natural powers take a single step towards the attainment of the beatific vision. For this he needs the assistance of actual grace. But this assistance is never denied him. And

it is in order that the path of return may be easy for him that, when grace is lost, God permits faith and hope still to remain in the soul. The sinner still believes what the Church teaches, and still hopes for heaven and fears hell. With greater or less frequency these motives present themselves to his mind, and solicit him to repent of his sin. If he should still cleave to evil, it can only be because he wilfully shuts his ears to the repeated calls of God's love.

For those who by heresy or unbelief have forfeited the gift of faith, repentance is far harder. Till faith is recovered a return to God is impossible. And experience shows that the recovery of faith demands graces of no ordinary kind. Yet even in regard to those who have flung away this precious gift, the Church assures us that they are not left destitute of God's help. They are, at least, moved from time to time to pray ; and if they will but put this grace to good use, all that they have lost will be restored to them. Their minds will be enlightened once again to recognize the truth, their hearts moved to acts of sincere sorrow, and the sacrament of penance will reconcile them to God.

There is indeed one class of sinners whose case presents special difficulty. If a man should persevere for a long time in the commission of grievous sin, not falling through human frailty,

but doing wrong of deliberate and set purpose, he becomes obdurate in evil. The mind becomes blinded, and the will hardened. He seems incapable of compunction or even of any realization of spiritual truth. From such God seems to have turned away His face. Yet even in such cases we must not suppose that the soul is so rejected by God as not to receive any assistance. He does not deprive these men of His ordinary graces; and these, if they would only use them, are sufficient. But He does not work a miracle on their behalf; He does not bestow those special and extraordinary graces which alone would bring them to repentance.

3. Our repentance is of different degrees of perfection according to the motives from which it springs. If our sorrow for past sins arises from our having offended One who is infinitely worthy of our love, and whom we love above all things, it springs from the highest of all motives. No motive can be nobler than the love of God for His own sake. But there may be a perfectly sincere and genuine sorrow due to less exalted reasons. We may be moved to repentance by the desire to attain to that heavenly beatitude, of which sin will assuredly deprive us; or our motive may be the fear of the torments of the damned, which will be our portion if we do not repent. One reason,

undoubtedly, why the doctrine of hell has been revealed to us, is that it may thus stimulate men to repentance.

The highest kind of sorrow is termed perfect contrition, or more usually simply *Contrition*. If based on any other motive but the highest, it is called imperfect contrition or *Attrition*. These two differ in a most important particular as regards their effects. An act of contrition avails to restore us forthwith to grace, even before we have approached the sacrament of penance and received the grace of absolution. It does not excuse us from the obligation of confessing the grave sins of which we may have been guilty. To neglect this duty would be to forfeit the grace we have recovered. But it restores grace then and there. Our Lord assures us that the Divine indwelling is the immediate consequence of the love of God on our part (John xiv. 23). And this Divine indwelling is, we know, only possible if the soul is adorned with sanctifying grace. The same truth is contained in St. John's words: "Dearly beloved, let us love one another: for charity is of God and every one that loveth is born of God" (1 John iv. 7). If the love of our neighbour for God's sake is a proof that we are "born of God," it is evident that the love of God

Himself necessarily carries with it the gift of grace.

Attrition does not immediately restore us to the status of children of God. But it enables us to recover sanctifying grace in the sacrament of penance. It has this effect because it removes all obstacles to the presence of grace. The sinner who has attrition, has a genuine detestation for his past sins and a firm purpose of serving God in the future. He has not, indeed, as yet risen to the performance of man's highest duty, the love of God; but the intention to perform it is included in his purpose of keeping all God's commands; and so soon as grace is given him, he will perform it. It is most important to note that the motive of fear may have this result. The sinner fears hell, and his fear of hell leads him to hate and detest the sins which threaten to drag him thither. From the time of Luther to the present day Protestants have contended that the Catholic doctrine of attrition is altogether immoral: that according to it a man may be forgiven if he simply desists from sin out of terror, even though his heart retains all its old attachment to sin: that it is a sorrow which involves no change of heart whatever. The objection is a mere travesty of Catholic doctrine. No Catholic

theologian has ever maintained such an opinion or anything like it. They have one and all taught that there is no forgiveness unless there is a genuine detestation for sins, and a total renunciation of all attachment to them. This has been pointed out by every Catholic writer on the subject for the last three hundred years. The objection, however, is still urged as though no answer had ever been given.

The Protestant teaching, which makes perfect contrition a necessary condition of all forgiveness, can only be productive of harm. As we have already pointed out, men do not as a rule rise to the higher degrees of virtue all at once: their advance is gradual, one step at a time. The man who has habituated himself to sin must be influenced by the fear of God's judgments before his heart can be touched to love God. The state of sin is sickness of the soul, and the vitiated spiritual taste can no longer relish the sweetness of God. The motive of fear is the remedy appropriate to such a condition. The ascent of a ladder is not rendered easier by the cutting away of all the lower rungs.

4. We have yet to speak of the debt of temporal punishment incurred by sin. Forgiveness of guilt does not carry with it the remission of all punishment. Sin is, in fact,

more than a breach of friendship with God. It deprives God of the honour which is due to Him from man, and is thus a violation of justice. Every sin contains an offence against both these duties. By forgiveness God restores us to His friendship ; but His wisdom decrees that we should discharge the debt due to justice. An illustration from earthly affairs may help us here. If a friend should wilfully trample on my flower-beds, and destroy my cherished plants, even though on his asking my pardon, I should freely forgive the wrong done to our friendship, I might still judge it best for his own sake not to forgo such compensation as he could give. Nevertheless, so far as mortal sin is concerned, it is plain that the whole character of punishment is altered when the guilt of the sin is forgiven. Till this takes place, the sinner is under sentence of damnation. So soon as he is reconciled to God, the penalty due is not the eternal pain of hell, but a measure of temporal pain to be endured in the cleansing fires of purgatory. The chastisement may be longer or shorter, more or less severe, but it is a chastisement inflicted in all love by a father on a son, not a penalty imposed on a rebellious criminal by a judge.

In regard to this subject theologians raise a

further question. If every mortal sin merits eternal punishment, what is it that determines the temporal punishment assigned to forgiven mortal sin? It is not easy to see how a merely temporal chastisement can bear any proportion to a guilt which is such as to have deserved an eternal penalty. Yet surely there is a proportion between the two. It is difficult to imagine that the measure of purgatorial pain is fixed solely by God's decree, and that there is not an intrinsic connection between the sin and its punishment.

On this point there is some difference of opinion among the theologians. It will be sufficient for us here to give the solution offered by St. Thomas. Mortal sin, he reminds us, may be viewed under two aspects. In every such sin there is, on the part of the soul, a turning towards creatures in something that is forbidden, and in consequence of this, a turning away from God, our last end. It is under the latter aspect that sin entails the debt of eternal punishment. The choice of a last end is, by its very nature, a choice determining the status of the soul; and if death should occur while the soul is thus separated from God, there is no possibility of recovery. It has chosen its lot, and must remain for ever excluded from all

hope of beatitude. This turning away from God is always due to undue love for some created good. The soul could not desire separation from God for its own sake. It accepts that separation sooner than forgo the good for which it craves. Unlawful love for the creature does not, apart from the consequent rejection of God, merit the dreadful sentence of eternal damnation; but it deserves some penalty on its own account. Thus, in hell, sins will not all be punished alike; but over and above the privation of God and the pains annexed to this, they will be visited with various penalties corresponding to their individual character. Now, if a soul recovers sanctifying grace, and is once more united with God as its last end, the debt of eternal punishment is at once cancelled: there is no longer any sentence of exclusion to bar its entrance into heaven. But the debt contracted by turning to creatures is unaffected, and must be paid either in this life or in purgatory. In this life, we are able to make satisfaction for it, not merely by self-imposed penance and acts of mortification, but by the patient endurance of trials and sorrows in conformity with God's will. Happy are those who thus discharge their debt, and do not leave it to be paid beyond the grave. For so

long as we live here, our actions are not merely satisfactory, but meritorious as well. The trials we endure, the mortifications we practise, win for us a fuller measure of sanctifying grace, and a higher place in heaven. It may at first sight, perhaps, appear that since our trials are not self-chosen, but imposed upon us by God, our endurance of them is involuntary, and can lay no claim to a reward. Yet this is not so. In so far as we submit our will to God's will in this regard, they become, in a real sense, an offering made by us to Him. We accept them by an act of free will, and God reckons them to us as voluntary actions. In purgatory, the hour for merit has gone by. There the soul undergoes purification. But no matter how prolonged its sufferings may be, it can gain no increment of grace. The measure of grace which it possessed when life's journey ended determines its place in heaven.

5. When a soul returns to grace after a fall, the obstacle which deprived its good works of this claim to a reward is done away. Considered in themselves, they were acts acceptable to God; and they did not cease to be so because the soul fell into sin. But so long as the state of sin endures, no reward can come to a soul. Let that state only be done away, and they are

once more reckoned to its account. So far, all theologians are agreed. But as to the way in which this doctrine of the recovery of merits should be interpreted, there is not the same unanimity. St. Thomas, in his treatment of the point, tells us that we must not suppose that the soul necessarily recovers the same quantity of grace as it forfeited, and consequently becomes entitled to the same reward of glory. The gift of grace is always proportionate to the dispositions of the soul. The principle that the degree in which any perfection is received is determined by the aptitude of the recipient, is of general application. We have already seen that it applies to the gift of grace, as bestowed upon an adult attaining to justification for the first time (Chap. VI., § 3). It is no less applicable to the return to grace after a lapse. If the sinner returns with intense contrition for his sin, and fervent love to God, whom he has offended, it may well be that he rises from sin with a measure of grace fuller than that from which he fell. If his sorrow, though genuine as far as it goes, is devoid of fervour, he will find himself poorer than he was. Ordinarily speaking, a man's sorrow will depend on what his past life has been. The man who in the

main has striven to serve God, will generally return with deep sorrow, while the contrition of the half-hearted Christian will be but languid. But though the grace thus recovered depends, so far as its quantity is concerned, on the dispositions of the repentant sinner, it will not be given him in regard of his act of contrition alone. His title to this grace consists of all his past good works, and his heavenly crown will be given him as the reward which they have earned.

It has often been contended that this view renders the recovery of merits purely nominal, and deprives it of all substantial reality. The force of the objection may best be seen by an example. Let us take a case in which two men both rise from a state of sin by an act of contrition of the same degree of fervour. One of these, it may be supposed, had, previous to his fall, acquired many merits; the other, none at all. According to the view we have just explained, these two men would possess the same degree of grace, and consequently would receive the same measure of the beatific vision in heaven. It is urged that if this be so, the man who previously lived well, and stored up many merits, might just as well never have done so: he is not a whit better off than the

man who has lived in sin all his life. Such an explanation, it is asserted, evacuates the doctrine of all its meaning.

It cannot be denied that the objection, at first sight, is forcible. But it owes its plausibility to the failure to realize that an altogether special dignity attaches to the heavenly reward, by reason of the good works for which it is the recompense. Hence, in the case supposed, even though the absolute quantity of glory is the same for each, the reward of the man who has done many meritorious actions will be of a different order from that of him whose sole title to heaven was his one act of contrition. God might have so disposed things that both angels and men should receive eternal beatitude, without having to struggle for it and earn it by their good works. Yet in order that they may possess it as a reward which they have won, and not merely as a gift on His part, He allows them to do battle with temptation throughout life, and to run all the risks of final failure and eternal loss, which that struggle carries with it. He has even judged it best to permit that many souls should fall away and perish, rather than that those which are saved should not have won their crown by their merits. It is, then, no light thing that the

good works of a soul should be in God's remembrance for all eternity as that soul's title to glory, even though the actual measure of the beatific vision which it enjoys be no greater than that which belongs to some soul which has entered heaven on the title of one act of intense contrition. Viewed in this light, it will be readily seen that the interpretation given by St. Thomas to the doctrine of the recovery of merits does not deprive it, as is alleged, of all value, and leave it a recovery in name alone. It is, further, to be noted that we have been speaking only of that heavenly reward which consists in the beatific vision. It is this which is determined by the grace which we possess. We shall see, in the last chapter of this work, that, besides the supreme reward of the beatific vision, the Blessed also enjoy certain subsidiary, or, as they are termed, accidental rewards; and that, so far as these are concerned, every good action will have its own special recompense. The opponents of St. Thomas's teaching ordinarily leave this consideration out of account.

It must not be thought, because the sinner recovers his merits when he returns to grace, that it follows as a consequence that, should he relapse again into sin, the guilt of former sins

will forthwith be imputed to him. The two cases are not really parallel. The merit of good works is never abolished : it is merely hindered from exercising its effect, because their doer is in a state of sin. As regards the forgiveness of sin, it is otherwise. The guilt of the sin is not suspended : it is done away. Hence a new fall from grace cannot restore it. Indeed, the expressions employed in Holy Scripture regarding the forgiveness of sins are such as to preclude all idea of any reviviscence of guilt. Such, for example, are the words of Micheas : "He will put away our iniquities, and He will cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea" (viii. 19); and those of Isaias : "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow : and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool" (i. 18). It should, however, be borne in mind that the malice of a sin is much increased when it is a relapse after forgiveness. It acquires a special character of ingratitude ; and, ordinarily, it involves the rejection of much clearer light. Hence the punishment which it will incur may be immensely greater. It is thus that we should understand the parable of the unmerciful servant. Here it is the fact that he has himself just been forgiven which renders his conduct towards his fellow-servant so abomin-

able a crime. When we are told that "his Lord, being angry, delivered him to the torturers, till he should pay all the debt" (Matt. xviii. 34), we are not to understand that his former guilt revived, but that his sin of cruelty and ingratitude was, in itself, such as to merit this tremendous penalty.

6. Something must be said, in conclusion, as to the effects of venial sin. By venial sin we do not reject God as our last end. Hence, it does not carry with it the forfeiture of charity and grace. These remain in the soul, even though the sinner does not avail himself of them. Even the greatest saints, our Lady alone excepted, have fallen into venial sins. Yet they did not thereby forfeit the gift of sanctifying grace. The more numerous our venial sins, the heavier is our debt of purgatorial suffering. But venial sins can never deserve the penalty of eternal damnation.

Not merely do venial sins not destroy sanctifying grace; they do not diminish it. If they did so, a time would come when, through venial sins alone, a man would fall from grace, and find himself in a state of sin. But such sins can never have this result. To fall into a state of sin, a man must positively turn away from God in such a way as to place his last end

elsewhere. In venial sin, there is no such turning away.

Nevertheless, if we do not keep up a constant warfare against venial sin, we are in grave peril of losing grace. Venial sins, above all if they are deliberately committed, habituate the soul to yield to temptation. The power of inclination grows stronger, and the control of reason weaker : the judgment is obscured, and the vigour of the will relaxed. Where this is the case, it is morally certain that, should a grave temptation suddenly present itself, a man will fall. Indeed, it is in this way that the fall of those who have lived pious lives ordinarily occurs. *Nemo repente fit turpissimus.* Men do not rush headlong from piety to mortal sin : there is an intervening stage of carelessness in regard to venial sins. A man, for instance, will allow himself to harbour a resentful spirit, saying to himself that, after all, there is no mortal sin in being surly. One day he receives a serious wrong ; the passion of anger blazes up in his heart, and he falls into a mortal sin of hatred. Hence spiritual writers, with one consent, warn us that the neglect of venial sin inevitably leads at last to a fall from grace. We are told of St. Paschal Baylon, that he used to say the road to hell was as surely paved with many little sins as with one great one.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH THE HOME OF GRACE

1. The Catholic Church the Home of Grace. 2. Situation of Heretics as regards Salvation. 3. Case of Jews and Mahommedans. 4. Problem of the Pagan World. 5. Theory of a *Limbus Adultorum* rejected.

1. The New Testament never allows us to lose sight of the truth that the Catholic Church alone is the home of grace. The Church is the company of the redeemed—the society of those who, through the Passion of Christ Jesus, have been delivered from the bondage of sin, and reconciled to God. But this deliverance from sin consists, as we have seen, in the possession of sanctifying grace. It is this that reconciles us with God, that elevates us to the dignity of His children, that procures for us the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Christ, our Lord, purchased these benefits for all mankind. Through His messengers He offers them to the whole world. But the greater part of men reject them : they have little desire for blessings

which belong to another life. Their whole interests are centred on this present existence; and they will have nothing to say to privileges which, as far as this life is concerned, entail self-denial and sacrifice. Some, however, welcome the offer, and desire to partake of the blessings. The conditions imposed on them are simple. They must believe the message, and enter the Church. Faith, as we have already explained, is an essential prerequisite, for God deals with us as rational beings. Our acceptance of salvation must be a free act of our own. We cannot be saved unless we seek salvation, nor can we seek salvation unless we believe the message which announces it. Baptism admits us into the Church; and in admitting us to the number of Christ's followers, incorporates us into Him. We become members of His mystical body, branches of the true Vine, partakers of all that He won for man on Calvary.

It is of the first importance to note that union with Christ is only conferred upon us by admission into the corporate society of the Church. We do not attain salvation independently of her, but as her members. It is to the Church that Christ has committed the gifts and graces which he merited for man.

The Divine revelation of truth, the sacrifice of the Mass, the seven fountains of grace, which we term sacraments—these are hers to dispense. If we desire the benefits of Christ's redemption, we must seek them in the Church. We can only obtain the privileges of sons of God by our admission into the family of God.

It is this that explains the teaching of our Lord and the apostles, that outside the Church salvation cannot be found. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," says our Lord; "but he that believeth not, shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16). To St. Paul the world outside the Church is the kingdom of the Evil One. "God," he says, "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. i. 13). And speaking of the excommunication by which he had excluded the heretics Hymenæus and Alexander from the Church, he says simply, "Whom I delivered unto Satan" (1 Tim. i. 20).

The voice of Christian tradition has ever spoken to the same effect. In the very first age of the Church, St. Ignatius of Antioch, writing in A.D. 107, says: "Be not deceived, my brethren. If any man followeth one that maketh schism, he doth not inherit

the kingdom of God. If anyone walketh in strange doctrine, he hath no fellowship with the Passion."[1] A little later, Origen writes as follows: "Let no man deceive himself. Outside this house" (*i.e.*, outside the Church) "none is saved."[2] And his great contemporary, St. Cyprian, is no less explicit: "He cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother."[3] The truth is often succinctly expressed in the form, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* (Outside the Church there is no salvation); and, as thus enunciated, has long been accepted as a recognized principle of Catholic theology.

This Divine society was endowed by our Lord, not merely with the internal gifts of which we have been speaking, but with certain visible characteristics challenging the attention of the whole world, and plainly declaring its supernatural origin to all men, to the unlettered as well as to the learned. Had He not done this, His work for men would have been incomplete. It would have availed little that He should have merited on their behalf the grace which makes them sons of God, and

[1] *Ad. Philadelph.*, n. 3.
[2] Hom. *in Jos.*, iii. 5. (P.G. xiii., 841.)
[3] *De Unit.*, c. vi.

should have committed it to His Church to dispense, if they were unable to distinguish His Church from those bodies of mere human institution which falsely claim that name. One of these characteristics, that of unity, He proclaimed, in the most solemn terms, on the last night of His life on earth, to be, in a special manner, the distinctive mark of His mystical body. He declared that the unity of the Church should symbolize on earth the unity of the Three Divine Persons, and should be so manifestly supernatural as to compel the world to acknowledge that He who founded this Church came from God. St. John has reported His words for us: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me" (John xvii. 22-23). There is no need to labour this point. The Catholic Church is spread over the whole world, and gathers in its members from men of every race, and every degree of cultivation—from the civilized and the barbarous, from the white and the coloured, from the conquering and the conquered. An institution which can unite these diverse elements in one, so that each

individual within it recognizes every other as his brother in God's sight; which can transcend the disruptive forces this diversity involves, must be of Divine origin. A doctrine which, remaining one and the same, can satisfy the needs of all those different classes, can be none other than God's truth. And the same conclusion is forced upon us, if we view this unity, not in respect of space, but of time. All other systems of thought yield to the solvents which time applies to them. On one point after another, they are weighed in the balances and found wanting: they pass into the limbo of those teachings which humanity has outgrown and discarded. The dogmatic system of the Catholic Church alone is changeless. No vestige of it ever perishes; the truths which she proclaims to-day are the same as those which the apostles announced to the world.

This unity does not establish the Church's claims simply because, having regard to man's tendency to divisions, it presupposes a supernatural power to effect it. Viewed in itself, it is something Divine. Discord is the work of the devil; and so, too, is error, in all its multiple varieties. Unity and concord come from God, and the truth, when once revealed by Him, must necessarily be changeless as

Himself. The unity of the Church as a single brotherhood is an apt symbol of the unity of the Divine Persons; the unity of her doctrine in all ages is the earthly expression of the immutable Divine truth.

Throughout Christian history there has ever been one only body which has displayed this mark of unity. This body is the Church in communion with the see of Rome, and ruled by the successor of St. Peter. She, and she alone, has the right to claim to be the home of grace.

2. It is, nevertheless, notorious that the Catholic Church confidently hopes for the salvation of many of those who are outside her visible communion. And it may well be asked how this hope is compatible with a teaching which, at first sight, is so rigorous as is that which we have just explained. The consideration of this point will engage our attention during the remainder of this chapter.

It is plain that the case of heretics and schismatics, who retain belief in the divinity of our Lord, and in a great part of the Christian revelation, is very different from that of Jews and Mahommedans; while these latter, again, possess at least a knowledge of the true God, and a belief in the fact of revelation, in which

the pagan world has no part. It will be necessary to treat of these classes separately.

As regards heretics the Church distinguishes sharply between culpable and inculpable, or, to employ theological terminology, formal and material heresy. Those are guilty of formal heresy who, knowing that to the Catholic Church has been entrusted the guardianship of Christ's revelation, and that she teaches such and such a doctrine, refuse to accept it, and fall away from her. Such were the heresiarchs, and a multitude of their immediate followers. These do, indeed, cut themselves off from salvation. But there are tens of thousands brought up in heresy, who have no such knowledge. From their earliest childhood they have been imbued with the belief that the Church's claims are false, and when they refuse her doctrines, they have no thought that they are rejecting the divinely accredited teacher of the human race. On the contrary, they sincerely wish to believe all that Christ has revealed, and, so far as they know, they do accept His teaching. Were it plain to them that the Catholic Church, and she alone, is the fold of Christ, they would hasten to enter her communion. They have the gift of faith, though they are accidentally deprived of external membership in the Church. They

belong to her in desire (*voto*). Moreover, vast numbers of them have been validly baptized; and baptism, even though administered by heretics, makes those who receive it, little as they dream of such a thing, members of the Catholic Church. Should they fall into mortal sin, the way of forgiveness is not closed to them. An act of perfect contrition can restore them to grace. It is true that our Lord ordained that every grave sin should be confessed in the tribunal of penance. But here, again, so far is the merely material heretic from refusing to obey, that he is rightly said to have the implicit desire of fulfilling the command. For his act of contrition contains the purpose to fulfil all God's commands, without exception. He can only realize this purpose in so far as his knowledge extends, and as he is ignorant of the precept to confess, he fails to fulfil it. But his desire to obey extends to all our Lord's laws, and, hence, implicitly even to this one. It is ignorance alone that hinders him from accomplishing it. There is, then, nothing to hinder us from hoping that very many of those brought up in heresy may be saved. But no mistake could be greater than to suppose that they are saved through the Lutheranism or Calvinism which they profess, that one

religion is as good as another, and that the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem are as numerous as the sects of Protestantism. The grace which saves them is the grace of the Catholic Church. They are saved, not because of, but in spite of, their material adherence to the heresy of Calvin, or Luther, or Queen Elizabeth. And, be it noted, it must not be supposed that there are two Churches, a visible and an invisible, and that salvation is through the invisible Church, whereas membership in the visible Church is of minor moment. The promises of Christ were made to the one corporate body—the visible Church. It is this Church, not an unknown invisible Church, that is the home of grace. The actual graces which God bestows on those outside her communion have, as their ultimate aim, to bring the recipients within her fold. And it is as belonging by desire to her that those of whom we are speaking attain salvation.

For heresy to be inculpable it is requisite that the person should be "invincibly ignorant" that he is in heresy. A man is said to be "invincibly ignorant" as to a point, when his ignorance is such that he is unaware of the obligation of further inquiry regarding it. On the other hand, his ignorance is "vincible" when he is conscious of the duty of further

investigation, but neglects to take adequate measures to that effect. It happens occasionally that a man, whose ignorance as to the Church's claims was previously invincible, comes to suspect that, after all, they may be true, and, nevertheless, in view of the serious sacrifices which certainty on the point might entail, deliberately ceases to pursue his inquiries. Ignorance such as this is vincible ignorance, and, in view of the fact that all men are bound to make great efforts to attain clear knowledge in matters affecting the salvation of their soul, is culpable, not inculpable.

Our hope that many Protestants will obtain salvation should not blind us to the terrible disadvantages under which they are compelled to seek it—disadvantages so great that a Catholic should reckon himself guilty of a grievous sin against the virtue of charity if he neglects to do what in him lies for the conversion of his non-Catholic neighbours. We cannot here do more than mention one or two of the difficulties in their path. For them, as we have seen, the forgiveness of grave sin can only be obtained by an act of perfect contrition : this alone can restore them to sanctifying grace. Yet they know nothing of sanctifying grace. The founders of Protestantism denied its very

existence. As a rule they have never learned how to make an act of contrition. Their ordinary books of instruction make no mention of any difference between the sorrow which springs from love and the sorrow whose motive is the mere hope of heaven. They are only taught in a general way that God forgives those who truly repent. Further, they lack the assurance of pardon which the sacrament of penance conveys. And there is no need to point out that it is just this assurance of pardon which makes it comparatively easy for a Catholic to rise again after a serious fall from grace; and that, where it is wanting, the difficulty of rising must be immeasurably greater. Again, they lack the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. And, apart from this gift, none can avoid grave sin save by a miracle of God's special favour.

Hitherto we have spoken of Protestants as though the possession of faith were the normal thing amongst them. Unfortunately this is not the case. They may, in their childhood, have been instructed in the tenets of some sect —Anglicanism, Methodism, Congregationalism. But when reason begins to emancipate itself, they soon discover that they have no guarantee for the truth of what they have been taught.

They acknowledge no infallible teacher, for the Bible has long lost its authority amongst them. And where there is no infallible guide, human reason becomes the sole criterion of truth. Without more ado all that constitutes a difficulty to the modern spirit is thrown away as antiquated—miracles, eternal punishment, the Virgin birth. Only too often all belief in a Divine revelation is definitely discarded. And, as we have seen, apart from supernatural faith, no one can hope to obtain sanctifying grace.

3. The case of Jews and Mahommedans differs materially from that of Protestants. It is true that, with all their errors, they worship the same God as ourselves—the God who created the world, and who revealed His law to Moses. But, on the other hand, they reject the claim of Jesus Christ to be the Eternal Son of God, and they repudiate His teaching. At first sight this would seem to exclude them from all hope of salvation. For there is no salvation save by faith in Christ. "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Yet recent theologians almost universally teach that where ignorance regarding Christ's claims is invincible, *explicit* faith is not absolutely

requisite, and that a Jew or a Mahommedan who believes in general whatever God may have revealed regarding the means He has ordained for the salvation of man, thereby makes an act of faith which implicitly includes belief in Christ. He who thus accepts God's revelation can make an act of supernatural charity, and find sanctifying grace. Undoubtedly the hindrances to salvation are here even greater than they are among Protestants. The light of truth shines far more dimly, and the devil has established his empire over souls more firmly. Yet salvation is not impossible. An act of faith such as we have described renders a man a member of the Church in desire, and thus he may save his soul, not, indeed, through his false religion, but in spite of it.

4. The problem of the pagan world has at all periods given rise to much questioning. If sanctifying grace, without which there can be no salvation, is given to no one except to such as have, by an act of faith, accepted God's supernatural revelation, what are we to think of the multitudes brought up in heathenism? What opportunity have these myriads of making an act of faith? What knowledge have they of the true God? In the Middle Ages that difficulty was scarcely felt. Geographical

knowledge was most imperfect, and there was a general belief that the main tenets of Christianity, and the chief arguments for its truth, had penetrated to the remotest parts of the earth's surface. The great voyages of the fifteenth century, and, above all, the discovery of America, revolutionized men's ideas on this subject. They realized for the first time how vast were the populations to whom no vestige of the Gospel message had penetrated. In our own days a somewhat similar effect was produced when the buried civilizations of the Euphrates and Nile Valleys were laid bare, and the study of palæontology showed at how remote a period human history began. There is little doubt that, to many minds, the new perspectives thus opened constituted a grave difficulty against the Church's teaching as to the need of faith.

The difficulty does not seem insoluble. A long series of investigations into the religions of uncivilized peoples seems to place it beyond a doubt that there is no race, however degraded, that does not possess a belief in a supreme God, who has made Himself known to man by revelation, and who vindicates the law of right and wrong by rewarding the good and punishing evil-doers. It is true that, as externally

manifested, the religion of savages is often mere devil-worship ; for they are apt to hold it more essential to propitiate the powers of evil, who are likely to harm them, than to implore the help of God. But this is not incompatible with their possession of a religious belief such as we have indicated. Now there is nothing extravagant in the supposition that amid the superstitions and immoralities which have overlaid religion among them, all pagan peoples have preserved this remnant of the primitive revelation made to our first parents. Indeed, it would have been difficult for it to perish ; for the ordered harmony of nature, and the voice of conscience within us, conspire to proclaim the existence of God, the Founder of the universe, and the moral Law-giver. We do not mean that the source of the beliefs of which we speak is to be found in the deductions of reason. Nowhere does religion refer its origin to human reasoning, but in every case to a communication made by God to man. Indeed, were their belief based on mere natural reason, it would not be belief in a Divine revelation at all. But it will not be denied that, granted the existence of a revelation, the truths in question are so consonant to the testimony of reason that they could hardly pass into oblivion.

If this be as we have supposed, we have what is essential to an act of supernatural and saving faith. The apostle, speaking of the necessity of faith to salvation, thus describes it: "He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6). These two points include *implicitly* all that God has revealed. If a man believes, regarding the God of revelation, that "He is," he implicitly believes all that He has taught concerning His own nature; and if he believes that "He is a rewarder of them that seek Him," he implicitly holds all that He has told us as to the means which He has ordained for our salvation.

There is, however, one serious difficulty, which calls for consideration. No one can make an act of faith in any truth, accepting it on God's authority, unless he has sure knowledge that God has revealed it. He must have full certainty that He has spoken to man, and spoken thus; and he must have sufficient grounds for this certainty. What grounds has the pagan for knowing that God has revealed these truths? The Jew can appeal to the miracles of Sinai, and to a tradition that has come down to him from the very origins of our

race. The Mahommedan, to the universal testimony of the wise and good, not merely amongst his own co-religionists, but amongst Catholics and Jews as well. But the savage learns these doctrines as part of the traditions of his tribe. His authority for them is no better than that on which he receives the grotesque fables of his tribal mythology. What adequate grounds can he have for an act of faith? To this, it may be replied, that to the simple mind it would be far more difficult to suppose that God has not made a revelation to His creatures, than that He has done so. And the two doctrines requisite for saving faith are so agreeable to reason, that a man can have no reason for doubting that they, at least, are truths He has revealed. He will recognize them as such, even when he has come to realize the falsity of much that passes in his tribe for religion. For if he be a seeker after God, God will not fail to enlighten his conscience as to the debasing and evil character of the observances in which he has been brought up. Hence, there seems little difficulty in supposing that, with the help of actual grace, he may make a genuine act of faith as to the two great truths. In this way he unites

himself in desire to the Church; and thus he may become a partaker in the salvation which it is hers, and hers alone, to dispense.

Such is the reply given by competent Catholic theologians to the difficulty which every follower of Christ must necessarily feel regarding the fate of pagans.[1] The medieval theologians, including St. Thomas, believing as they did that a knowledge of the Gospel was within the reach of all men of good will, were disposed to insist on the need of an explicit faith in the Incarnation. But the difference here is accidental, not essential. They admitted the principle of implicit faith by allowing that it had sufficed before the Gospel was preached. And they affirm, as an absolutely certain truth, that to every human being is offered the opportunity of salvation. In more than one passage of his works St. Thomas considers the hypothetical case of a child nurtured, as was Romulus, by beasts, and growing up in the forests remote from all commerce with his kind. He declares that, if one thus situated should but correspond with the actual grace given to him, God would not permit him to perish. He would so dispose things by His Providence that some Christian preacher should reach him, or

[1] *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Vacant, *Études Théologiques*, II., p. 123, *seq.*

He would even, if need were, send an angel to reveal to him the necessary truths of faith.[1]

5. Some few writers have held that it is simpler to admit that supernatural faith is, in fact, out of the reach of pagans. It is suggested that possibly those who have never heard the Gospel fall under a different dispensation of Divine Providence, and that it may not be required of them that they should rise to the supernatural order at all. May we not, it is asked, suppose that there are many pagans who, though destitute of faith, yet keep the moral law so far as they know it, and thus avoid formal mortal sin? If so, it would seem to follow that such as these after death attain, not indeed to the supernatural happiness of heaven, but to a natural happiness: that they pass, in fact, to a *limbus adultorum*, identical, it may be, with the *limbus infantium*, which all acknowledge to be the destiny of unbaptized infants. The idea, at first sight, seems to afford a simpler solution of the problem than that which we have offered. It is, however, destitute of any support in Scripture, or in tradition, and is regarded by all theologians as inadmissible. Scripture, indeed, would appear

[1] *Q.D. de Verit*, q. 14, art. 11, ad. 1; II. *S.* d. 28, q. 1, art. 4, ad. 4; III. *S.* d. 25, q. 2, art. 1; q. 1 ad. 1.

to teach with sufficient plainness that there are but two alternatives for men—heaven and hell. When our Lord foretells the judgment of the Last Day, He describes the judged as divided into two classes alone, destined, respectively, for the beatitude of heaven and for the fires of hell. He speaks of that judgment as embracing "all nations." According to the hypothesis we are considering, the greater part of humanity would be excluded from its scope. Another weighty argument against it is drawn from the manner in which the early Christian apologists dealt with this difficulty, when they were asked by their pagan opponents what had been the fate of the countless generations which had preceded Christ. They did not answer that God had dealt with these in another way: they replied that Christ was "the Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," and that salvation through Him had been possible to all. Again, it is a dogma of faith, clearly expressed in Scripture, and defined by the Church against the Pelagians, that without the grace of God no man can for long avoid grave sin. This teaching excludes the possibility of a pagan remaining in the purely natural order, and nevertheless, living a life of virtue. But if it

be granted that whenever a pagan really lives a virtuous life, he does so through the aid of supernatural grace, there seems no reason whatever why grace should not enable him to elicit acts of faith and love, and thus attain justification.

The fact is that the few writers who at the close of the eighteenth century adopted this view,[1] were driven to it by a rigorist theory as to the absolute necessity of an explicit faith in the Incarnation, which had for some time been prevalent in the French theological schools. There can, of course, be no question of faith of this kind in the pagan world. Hence, since it is inconceivable that the greater part of the human race is damned through no fault of its own, they were compelled to invent some such hypothesis as this. But their theory found little support. It was universally recognized that it could not be made to harmonize with Catholic teaching, and that the real solution of the difficulty must be sought in the doctrine of implicit faith.

We have given a brief consideration to this point; for even now, from time to time, we find

[1] None of these was a theologian of the first rank. The most eminent was the Abbé Emery, Superior of the Society of St. Sulpice, b. 1732, d. 1811.

the *limbus adultorum* put forward as being a new and important suggestion towards the solution of a difficult problem. It seemed well to point out that it is no new idea, but that it has long since been weighed and set aside by those best qualified to judge.

CHAPTER XII

GRACE AND GLORY

1. The Divine Sonship Perfected. 2. The Beatific Vision. 3. The Love of the Blessed. 4. The Joy of the Blessed. 5. "Accidental" Rewards.

1. THE glory of the Blessed may be viewed under two aspects: as the heritage due to those who by grace have become the sons of God, or as being itself the final perfection of that sonship. It is under the former aspect that it is generally regarded in Holy Scripture; and it is in this light that we have hitherto considered it. But there are not wanting passages which remind us, that though the Divine adoption is already ours, yet our sonship remains in this life inchoative and imperfect, and can only find its full consummation in the life to come. There is nothing to surprise us in this. The cognate notion of salvation is similarly considered from these two distinct points of view. In some passages, our salvation is spoken of as something that has been already

bestowed upon us. Thus, in a passage already quoted, St. Paul says: "According to His mercy He saved us by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. iii. 5, *cf.* 1 Pet. iii. 21). Elsewhere it is held up as something not yet attained, an object of hope and desire. "At present," says the apostle, "it is in hope that we are saved" (Rom. viii. 24).[1] In this same passage he speaks of our sonship to God in the following terms: "Ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves also, groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit the redemption of our body" (Rom. viii. 23, R.V.). In these words he clearly affirms that our adoption cannot have its full and complete perfection until our final glorification. This is implied, too, in the statement that we have received "the firstfruits" of the Spirit. For our sonship is the work of the Holy Ghost within us: it is His presence within us that confers on us the gift of the new life. Yet at present it is the firstfruits only of the Spirit that we possess. That which He has done for us is but the pledge and earnest of what He will effect eventually

[1] Both the Douay Bible and the R.V. give "by hope" and not "in hope." This rendering fails to give the meaning of the original. Crampon's Bible translates more correctly: "Car c'est en espérance que nous sommes sauvés."

(2 Cor. v. 5, Rom. viii. 1). The same truth, again, is contained in those passages in which St. Paul exhorts his readers to put off the old man, and to put on the new (Eph. iv. 22-24, Col. iii. 10). If the old man still cleaves to us and we must still labour to put on the new, it is manifest that the consummation of our sonship is not yet achieved.

We have seen in a previous chapter (Chap. II. § 3) that St. John declares sonship to be incompatible with sin. "Whosoever is born of God," he says, "committeth not sin: for His seed abideth in him. And he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9). The sonship which we possess here, is, indeed, incompatible with mortal sin. So long as we retain it, it excludes sins of that degree; and if we deliberately violate God's law in a grave matter, we thereby forfeit our adoption. But venial sin is found even in the saints. Hence, both St. Ambrose and St. Augustine tell us that St John's words must be understood, not in reference to the imperfect state of sonship which is all we have here, but of the perfect state which will be ours in heaven.[1]

[1] August., *Con. II. Epist. Pelag.*, iv., 31 (P.L. xliv., 634); *De Pecc. Merit.*, ii. 9 (P.L. xliv., 156). In the former of these passages he quotes at some length from a work of St. Ambrose no longer extant.

It is of no little importance that we should take account of this aspect of glory, and not consider it simply in the light of reward attached to grace. As we have already pointed out (Chap. II. § 1), the relation between the two is not merely external, depending simply on a Divine decree that so much glory shall be the recompense of so much grace: but glory is the development of grace, and issues from grace as the fruit from the seed. It is when we view glory as the consummation of grace, that the true connection between them is most clearly seen.

Glory, as we saw, consists primarily in the beatific vision. Scripture declares in the most explicit terms that the just are to behold God "face to face": and the same truth is affirmed by the unanimous voice of the fathers, and by the express definitions of the Church. The possession of the beatific vision is the final culmination of our sonship: nor is any further advance than this conceivable. For to see God is to share in the bliss proper to God Himself. It is to enjoy the knowledge, the love, and the delight in which the Divine bliss consists, and which are utterly beyond the reach of any creature's natural faculties. It is because in grace we possess all this in germ, that the

fathers of the Church speak of the gift of grace as a deification. Our "essential" reward lies in this, and in this alone. But the state of glory carries also with it certain prerogatives, great in themselves, though not approaching the beatific vision in dignity. These are called "accidental" rewards, and without some mention of these any account of celestial happiness would be incomplete. Our purpose in this chapter is to indicate very briefly the principal characteristics of both these elements of our final beatitude.

2. Though the beatific vision, in addition to the knowledge of God, includes the love of God and the joy consequent on the possession of God, it is knowledge that holds the first place. In beholding God the soul has reached the final term of its journey. It has attained its last end. Love and joy are consequent on that attainment: they do not constitute it. It is true that in this life the love of charity brings us nearer to God than the knowledge of God which faith affords. But this is because faith is but an imperfect knowledge—the knowledge of those who are "absent from the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 6, 7)—whereas charity, even here, is a love which unites us to God Himself. The knowledge of the beatific vision is a

knowledge by which we are present to God and possess Him. Some few, indeed, of the great theologians have disputed this view, and have been inclined to assign the chief part in our beatitude to love. But apart from the reason which we have just given, the words of Scripture appear to be decisive. The inspired authors speak of the sight of God, not of union with God by love, as our ultimate reward.

What then is it to see God? It is to behold, and in beholding to possess, the fulness of all Being, all Truth, all Goodness, all Beauty. Men have ever seen that these things are the worthiest ends of human endeavour. And here in this life, if they can discover some fragmentary aspect of truth, if they can seize some fugitive vision of beauty, they count that they have done much. But the sight of God will display to our gaze the very fountain-head of all these, the adorable source of all reality and all perfection—the Living God. We shall see Him, not as faintly mirrored in His created works, but as He is. The mysteries of the Godhead—the ineffable splendours of the Divine Processions will reveal themselves to us. We shall behold the eternal generation of the Son, the procession by which the Holy Ghost, the subsistent love of the Father and the Son,

proceeds eternally from these Divine Persons. We shall know these things with a knowledge similar to that of the Three Persons themselves. Not less than this can be meant by our Lord's words: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me: that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world" (John xvii. 26). It does not lie in our power to develop this theme. In speaking of this subject we can do no more than point out in a few bald words what is meant by the Vision of God. We are dealing with matters as to which human language is not merely inadequate but altogether powerless.

The beatitude of which we are speaking possesses a feature which differentiates it so widely from any joys which we know here, as to claim special notice. It is changeless. In it the Blessed enter on a final state, which admits of no alteration. They partake in their degree of the Divine changelessness. The very act by which the soul beholds God is a single abiding act, lasting for ever. At first sight it is difficult for us to realize that this can be an element, and a necessary element, in perfect happiness. It would seem on the contrary as

though it must have an opposite effect. Happiness, as we know it, involves change. Yet a little consideration will convince us that this need for change is due solely to the conditions of our present existence, and to the imperfection of the joys which it affords. The things which bring us pleasure do but satisfy some one or other of our multifarious needs and desires. What delights the eye, leaves, it may be, the mind unsatisfied; and what brings joy to the mind, leaves the body wearied and relaxed. Hence, no pleasure has any long continuance. Other needs make themselves felt, and mar our sense of joy. Indeed, usually it is not long before we become conscious of limitations and imperfections in what at first pleased us beyond measure. And it may even be that our attention fixes itself on these shortcomings, till pleasure is turned to distaste. Moreover, we ourselves are ever changing. We outgrow the pleasures which at one time meant much to us: we crave for something new.

In the Vision of God granted to the Blessed none of these conditions is present. In it they attain the Infinite Good. Here there is no limitation, no imperfection; this happiness is one which can never cloy. Moreover, no unsatisfied craving can assert itself, proving

that our bliss, after all, is but partial and incomplete. The Infinite Good fulfils every need and every desire of the soul. Henceforth, the sense of void is for that soul an impossibility. Nor, again, can new needs spring up through changes in the soul's state. While we live on earth, the soul changes : it grows in grace, and thus attains to new and higher degrees of sonship to God. With its entry into bliss, its growth and its development cease.

The point we have just mentioned should not be overlooked. Non-Catholic writers often speak as though our future state must needs be one of endless progress ; as though eternal life could not be other than a condition of growth and advance. This is not the case. Our participation in the beatific vision is determined by our measure of sanctifying grace. There could be no addition to our beatitude unless there were a corresponding increase in grace. But we know that when this life is over, no such increase will be given us. While we live here we can acquire grace by good works and through the sacraments of the Church. But after death no further opportunity is given. The grace we possess when death befalls us fixes the measure of our blessedness for ever.

The life of God is not, like ours, conditioned by time. Although we are unable to imagine a life in which time has no part, we can understand that existence in time is an imperfect form of being. To live in time is to possess life in parts, one part following another. It is to be ever losing what we have, ever passing on to something new. He, who is infinite in all perfection, cannot lose aught of His life, nor acquire anything He did not already possess. In Him there is no flow of time. His life is a moment which never passes —the everlasting Now of eternity. The act by which the Blessed know God is nothing less than a share in that eternal life. The stream of time can rob them of no portion of that glorious existence. The state upon which they have entered is one that is not measured by the passage of the hours. They have reached the goal. They possess a changeless life—a life summed up in a single act, which lasts for ever, and by which they partake in the eternity of God.

What we have said refers, it should be understood, to the "essential" reward alone. As we shall see, all change is not excluded from the life of the Blessed. In regard to created things, they acquire new knowledge and may be

moved to new activities. But this pertains to their "accidental" reward, of which we shall say something shortly.

It may, perhaps, be asked how the reward of one soul can differ from that of another; for there can be no such thing as seeing a portion of God—God has no parts: he who sees God must see Him in His entirety. This is true. Yet it is clear that no created faculty can receive more than a certain measure of that ocean of light which is God. The Blessed behold God in His entirety, but no one of them knows Him as He can be known. He Himself alone can fathom the abyss, and know in their fulness the illimitable perfections of the Godhead. Each soul that enters heaven will possess the Vision in the degree which his powers admit: and, as we have seen, that degree is determined by the grace within his soul. But in every case the soul's happiness attains the full measure that for it is possible. None envies the higher lot of another. For none desires to possess more. The cup of each is filled to the very limit of its capacity.

3. If it is by the Vision of God that, strictly speaking, we attain our last end, the love of God follows as a necessary consequence. By a necessity of our being we are drawn to the

Good. Whatever we seek for here, we seek because it appears to us to be something good. Good is ever the object of the will, the motive which leads us to act. Even when the sinner chooses evil, he does so because he counts it to be good. What, then, will be the attraction exerted on the soul when it beholds God face to face : for to see Him is to see the source of all good ? All created beauty is but the far-off reflection of some single aspect of the uncreated loveliness of God. All virtue, all wisdom, all power, all that can move our admiration and wake our enthusiasm here—these are but streamlets descending from God, the fountain-head of good. It does not lie within our power to form any conception of the intensity of the love which at that instant will well up within the soul, of the overwhelming force by which it will be drawn to Him. If we suppose some planet to leave its orbit, and fly with unimaginable velocity to the sun, it does but afford an inadequate illustration of what the soul must experience when it is admitted to the sight of God. It flies to Him, to be bound to Him for ever in the embrace of love.

The love of the Blessed for God, like their knowledge, is a single abiding act which knows no change. Here our love towards Him cannot be

constantly in exercise. The various occupations of our daily round compel us to turn our attention to many different matters, and render it impossible for us to keep the thought of God continually before our minds. Moreover, the natural object of our faculties is this concrete world of which we have sensible experience. It is hard for us to fix the mind for long on that which we cannot see, or hear, or touch. The images of sense distract the attention, and carry the thought down from heaven to earth. But it is only when we think of God that we can love Him. Hence, in the very nature of things our love of God is intermittent. It cannot, as we would wish, dominate continuously all the activities of the soul. Besides, even when we think of God, we are not immediately and necessarily drawn to acts of love. We walk by faith, and God does not manifest Himself to us in His full attractiveness. The art of loving God must be learnt by degrees.

But when faith has passed into sight all impediments will be done away. Then nothing will be able to distract us, nothing will hinder us from feeling the infinite sweetness of God. And as our knowledge will be continuous, so will be our love. It will be impossible for us even for an instant not to love Him. Our whole existence will be the perfect fulfilment of our

Lord's command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" (Luke x. 27).

The love of heaven excludes all possibility of sin. We fall into sin here because in this life we see but dimly the attractiveness of God. Indeed, the love of God, involving, as it must, obedience to God's commands, may demand the sacrifice of much that is agreeable to human nature. It is only too possible for the will to turn aside from the eternal good, which it knows by faith alone, and choose some temporal good, worthless in comparison, but which offers itself here and now. But to those who enjoy the beatific vision nothing can enter into rivalry with God. To suppose that the soul which sees the full glory of the Divine Essence should prefer some miserable fleeting satisfaction, is to imagine the most extreme of impossibilities. Moreover, since this love is perpetual and changeless, it can never happen that temptation should come when the soul is off its guard—when it is not loving God, or not loving Him with its full fervour—and coming at such a moment should seduce it from its allegiance.

We may go yet further. The soul which enjoys the beatific vision is so dominated by

the love of God that it is impossible for it to love anything save in reference to that supreme love. For the Divine Essence is Essential Goodness itself. Just as in this life it is impossible for us to desire anything save for some goodness belonging to it, so those who see God, and in seeing Him behold Essential Goodness, can desire nothing save for God's sake. Their love for other things is of necessity subordinated to and referred to their love of God. Whatever else claims their affection, claims it as leading up to this as to its end. In this life one of our chiefest dangers lies in the fact that we become attached to things for their own sake, and independently of their relation to God. Hence a conflict between the two affections may ensue; and when love for the creature has become excessive, sin is the result. But when the soul has found the Infinite Good, this cannot be. This must be the ultimate aim, the last end of every motion of the soul. It cannot in the nature of things admit any love which does not tend towards Him.

4. In regard to the joy of the Blessed, it is not necessary to speak at any length. What has been said as to their knowledge and love of God will suffice to show what must be the immensity of their joy. For joy consists in the

possession of some good for which we crave, and in the consciousness of that possession. And the greater the good that is in question, the deeper the desire which we have felt for it, and the more secure our possession, the more intense will be our joy. Here the good attained is of infinite worth. Moreover, the possession of it is absolutely secure. The goods of this life, honour, endowments of body or of mind, wealth—all these are ours only for a short time. We must part from them at death; and often they leave us long before death approaches. But our tenure of the Infinite Good is eternal: nothing can rob us of that. The degree in which we desire that supreme good depends chiefly on ourselves. Our increase in the virtue of charity is a matter for our own efforts. The greater our love for God here, the more intense will be our joy in heaven.

It is this aspect of joy on which Scripture seems to lay most stress, when speaking of the life to come. Often it seeks to bring it home to us by way of contrast with the trials of earth. Heaven is the place "where death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow: for the former things have passed away" (Apoc. xxi. 4). But in other passages it is set before

us in its more positive aspect. It is a feast to which God bids us—the bridal feast of the Son of God with His Spouse the Church (Apoc. xix.); it is a celestial city where we are to dwell (Apoc. xxii.); it is a kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world (Matt. xxv. 34). In this way God has sought to make us realize that the joys of earth, which move us so strongly, and for the sake of which so many forfeit their heavenly inheritance, are worthless as dust in comparison with what He offers us in heaven.

To some among the saints has been given, as it were, some foretaste of heavenly joys even during this life. Those on whom this high privilege has been bestowed assure us with one consent that so immeasurably do these surpass anything which this earth can give, that an hour of this bliss would be cheaply purchased by a lifetime of penance. Such is the testimony of St Theresa; such that of St. John of the Cross; such, again, that of B. Angela of Foligno. Strange it is that we should be so slow of heart to appreciate these things, and should find it so difficult to make the smallest sacrifices to gain so stupendous a prize.

5. Hitherto, we have considered only the "essential" reward of the just—the possession

of God through the beatific vision, and the love and joy immediately consequent upon this. But it is manifest that the knowledge and the love of the Blessed extend also to creatures, and that here they possess a distinct, though dependent, source of happiness. It is this which we term their "accidental" reward. In regard to it, revelation tells us something; and there are also certain conclusions which claim so high a degree of antecedent probability that they have won the universal assent of theologians. Thus all admit that the souls which see God, behold Him as the fountain of all truth, and thus participate, each in his measure, in His infinite knowledge. In this way, it is held, each is made aware of what passes upon earth, so far as it may concern him. The saints thus know of the honours paid them by the Church, and of the prayers offered to them, and are able to exert their power with God on behalf of their clients. Thus, too, every one of the Blessed learns how it fares with those who are dear to him.

Again, it is the lot of most men to die before they have seen their labours for God bear fruit. Other hands reap what they have sown. But the consolation which they did not enjoy in this life, is theirs in the next. The full results

of their toil, the rich harvest it bears, as, with the passage of time, its influence spreads more and more widely, is made known to them in God. This does not, it is true, increase their essential joy. That, as we have seen, is fixed at the moment of death, and is determined by the sanctifying grace they then possess. But it should not, on that account, be passed over, when we reckon up the rewards prepared for those who work for God. This particular reward, indeed, supplies a reply to the difficulty urged by not a few theologians against St. Thomas's doctrine of the recovery of merits. We saw in Chapter X., § 5, that those who fall into mortal sin, and subsequently return to grace, do not necessarily recover their title to the full reward which they forfeited, but only in proportion to the fervour with which they repent. It is contended, as we there pointed out, by some, that in the case in which a man has previously possessed much grace and done many good works, but rises from sin with little fervour, the recovery of merits, as so explained, becomes merely nominal. We showed what we regarded as adequate reasons for regarding the objection as ill-founded. But here it should also be noted that in such a case, even though a man's essential reward is determined solely

by the grace in which he rises, he will, to all eternity, possess a special joy in those good works which he did when his store of grace was ampler, and in the fruits which they have borne.[1]

Yet another subsidiary reward of the just lies in the joy derived from the companionship of the angels and the saints. In that city of the Blessed there will be no possibility of those rivalries and disagreements which mar the happiness of human intercourse. None will find the presence of any other irksome. All earthly imperfections will have been purged away. There, love binds all together. All are dear to God, and the soul that loves God must needs love those whom God loves. This will be the primary measure of our love, for in proportion to its nearness to God will any soul be worthy of love. Here on earth the "order of charity," as it is termed, is based on other principles. We do not know the degree of grace possessed by souls, nor that to which God destines them to attain. Hence we love best those with whom we are more closely connected by blood, or by other legitimate ties. There, amongst our fellow-citizens in the heavenly Jerusalem, our love will go out first and

[1] *Summa*, III. p., q. 89, art. 5, ad 3.

foremost to our Blessed Lady; and, after her, to the angels and saints, to each in due measure. For each will attract our love in proportion to the Divine grace which adorns him. This does not mean that earthly ties of relationship and of friendship will be blotted out. We know that it is not so, and that we shall rejoice in the sight of those we have loved here. But these motives will none of them equal in intensity that which is found in the nearness of a soul to God. It is this which determines the order of charity of heaven.

There is one portion of their reward which the just will only receive at the last day. This is the glorification of the body. When, at our Lord's second coming, the souls of the Blessed enter once again into the bodies from which they were parted by death, those bodies will be rendered worthy of the sons of God. Not merely will they no longer be subject to disease, decay and death, the penalties of original sin, but they will be clothed with celestial beauty and endowed with special powers, transcending the natural properties of matter. "Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43), said our Lord regarding that day. The bodies of the just will be like His own glorious

Body. Once only during His earthly life did He manifest Himself under that form. Of that appearance to the three chosen apostles on Mount Thabor, we are told: "His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow" (Matt. xvii. 2). It was thus in glory that St. Paul beheld Him, when in the hour of his conversion he fell to the ground, blinded by the light which surrounded Him. A similar glory, the apostle assures us in his epistle to the Philippians, is to be ours. "We wait," he says, "for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working, whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21, R.V.). But the glory will not be given to all in equal measure. "Star," he reminds us, "differeth from star in glory" (1 Cor. xv. 41). The glory of the body corresponds to the essential beatitude of the soul. Thus the good works by which we increase our store of grace here will bring a reward, not only to the soul, but to the body also.

We have seen in this chapter how wonderful is the heavenly inheritance of those who by God's unspeakable mercy have been made

members of the Catholic Church, and received the gift of sanctifying grace. Well might the apostle say of that inheritance: "I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18). So strong is our title to its possession that he does not hesitate to speak as though it were already ours: "God, who is rich in mercy . . . . hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved), and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 4-6). Well, indeed, could he speak thus; for though at present we are only saved "in hope," yet we are in very truth the sons of God, and even here below are nourished on the bread of angels.

To purchase for us this inheritance, Christ, our Lord poured out His Precious Blood upon the Cross. May the thought of what we owe Him teach us to love Him better, and to follow more closely in His footsteps!

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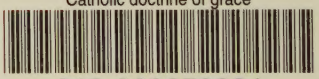

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